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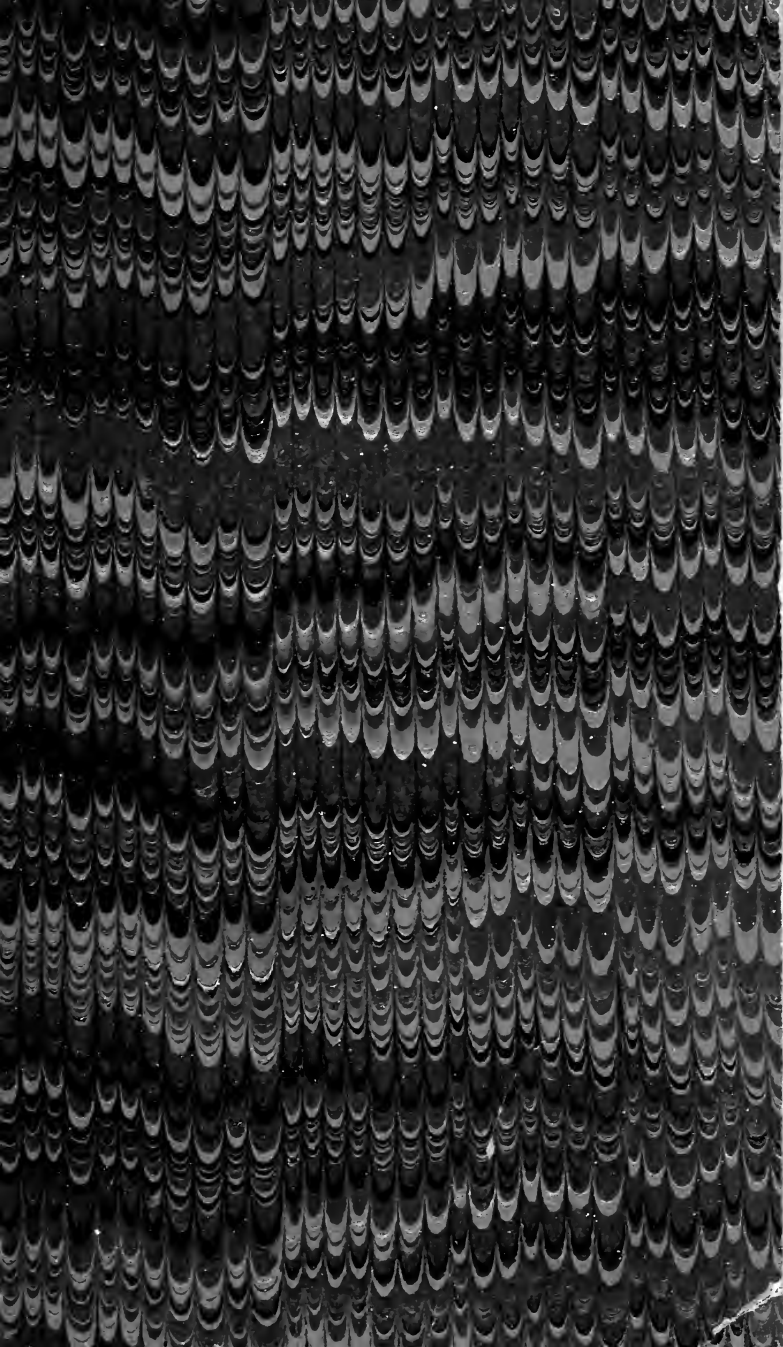
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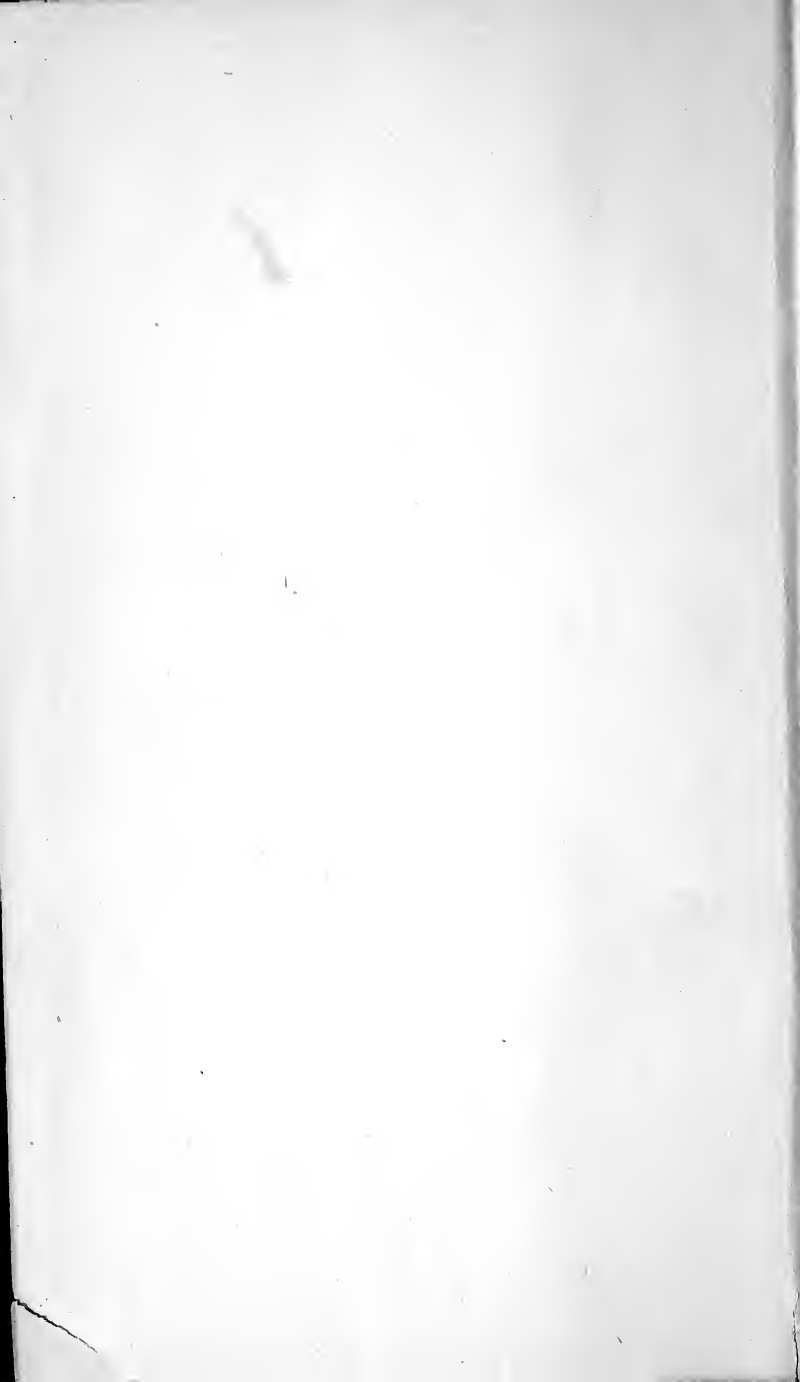
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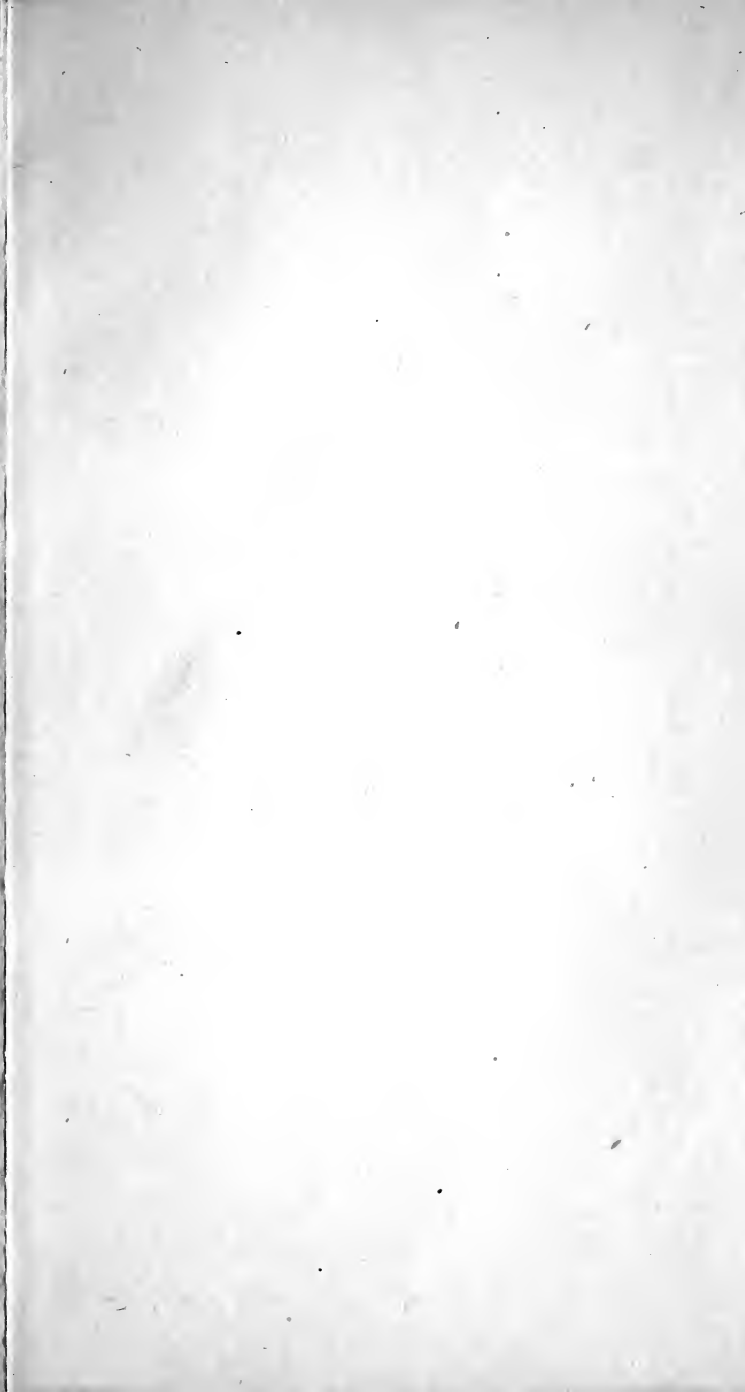
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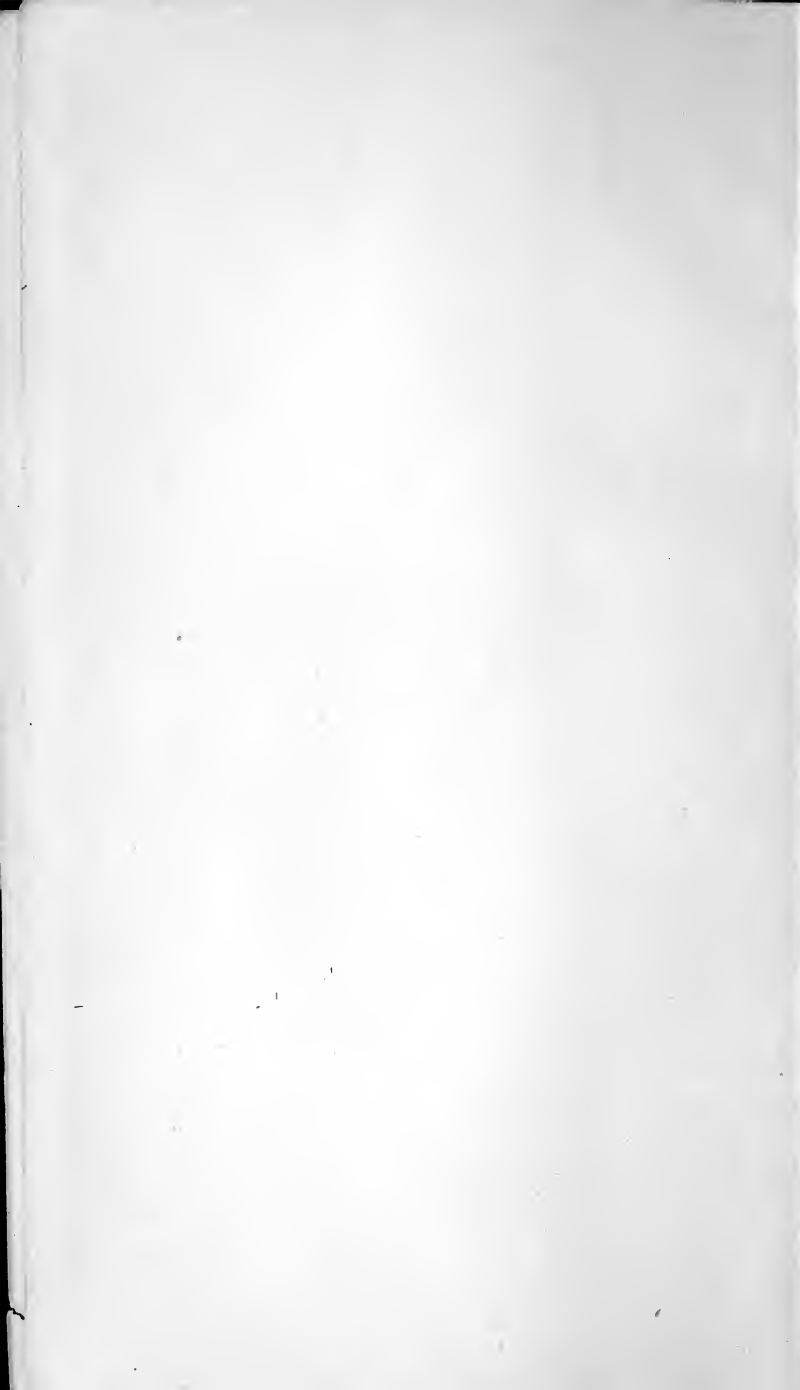
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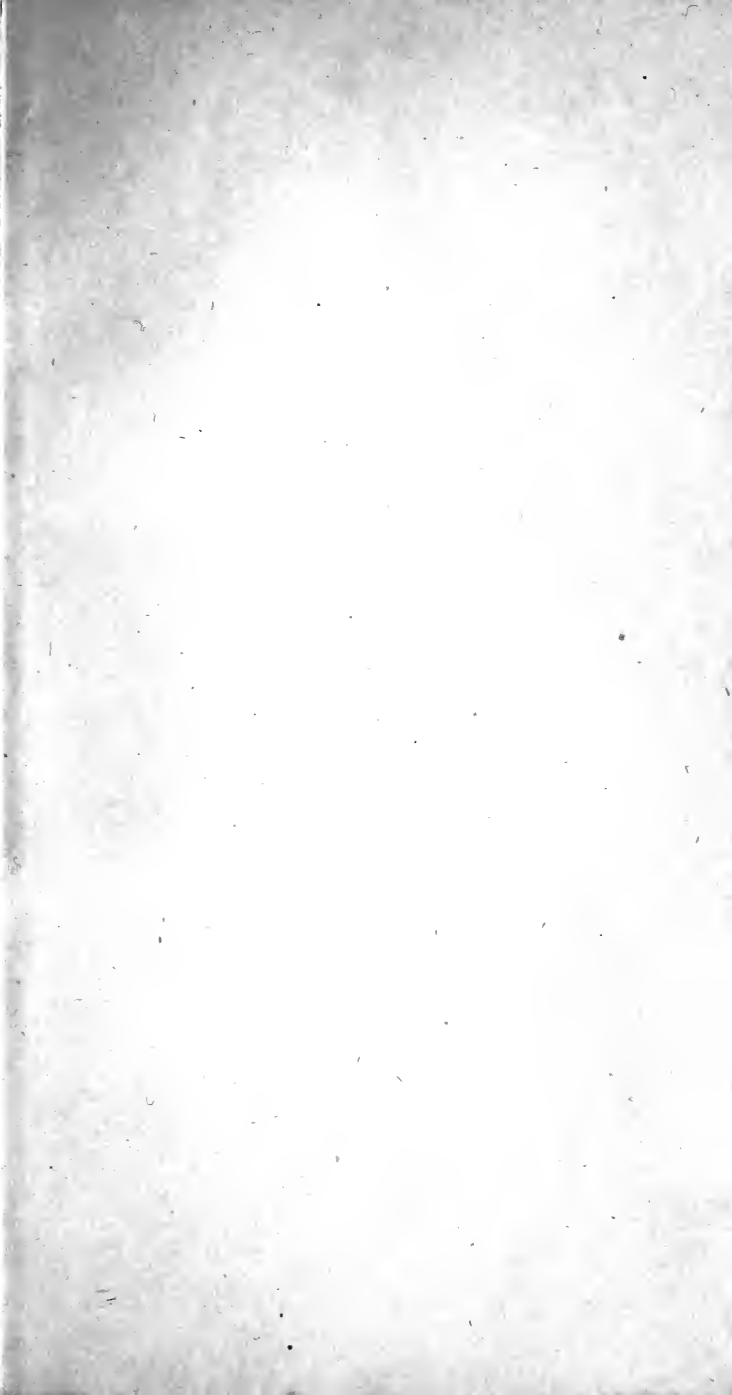
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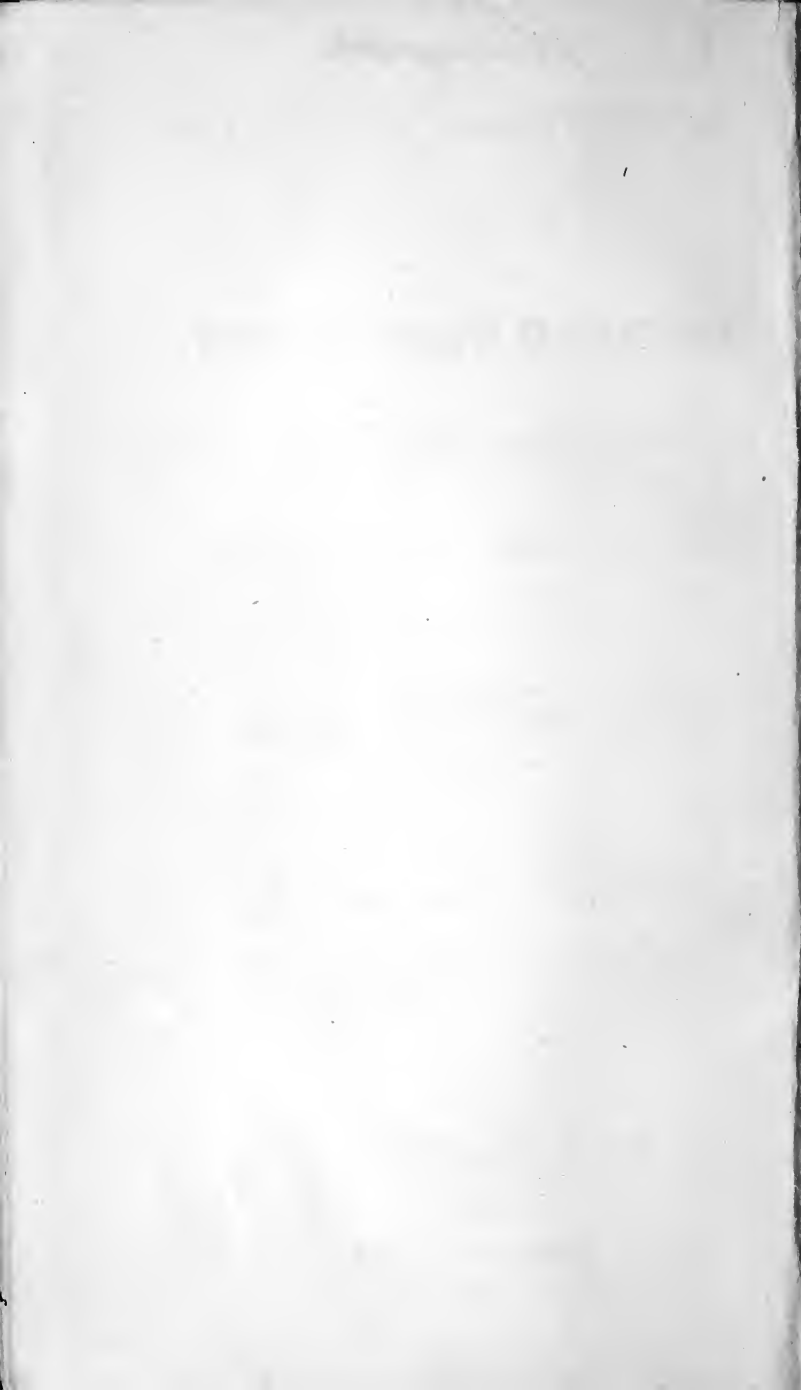












E. Minnow

SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE

IN FAVOUR OF

FEMALE TESTIMONY.

IN MEETINGS FOR CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

IN LETTERS TO A FRIEND.

—  —
BY HARRIET LIVERMORE.
—  —

Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.

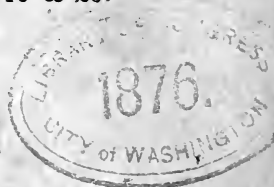
To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

Isa. viii. 16 & 20.

PORTSMOUTH, N. H.

.....
Printed by R. Foster.

1824.



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*New-Hampshire District, to wit:-
District Clerk's Office.*

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the 12th day of August, A. D. 1824, and in the forty-ninth year of the Independence of the United States of America, HARRIET LIVERMORE, of the said District, has deposited in this Office the title of a book, the right whereof she claims as Author, in the words following, to wit:

"Scriptural Evidence in favor of Female Testimony. In Meetings for Christian Worship. In letters to a friend. By HARRIET LIVERMORE. Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.—Isa. viii, 16 & 20."

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned;" and also to an act, entitled, "an act, supplementary to an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching, historical and other prints."

WILLIAM CLAGGETT, *Clerk of the
District of New-Hampshire.*

A true copy of record.

Attest.

WILLIAM CLAGGETT, *Clerk.*

SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE, &c.

LETTER I.

My dear Sister in the Lord,

DURING my visit at your hospitable mansion last winter, in the course of frequent conversations upon (what is termed) "female preaching," you requested me to transcribe for you those passages in Scripture, which might place the subject in a favourable point of view. I obligated myself in a measure to attend to your request. Believe me, dear sister, that partial promise has not been forgotten, nor your wishes unheeded by me, since my departure from Connecticut. I am bound to you by the laws of gratitude, as well as christian ties. The unwearied, tender attentions I received at your house, in a season of affliction, by bodily indisposition, can never, I think fade away from my remembrance, "till sorrow cease to blend with the wandering pilgrim's joy;" and my weary head rest quietly beneath the unconscious sod. It would certainly be to my heart a source of joyful satisfaction, could I pay you any attention demonstrative of my respect for yourself and family. Alas! my power is finited by personal and mental weakness: and my best endeavours will prove un-

answerable to my wishes to serve you. This persuasion resulting from an impartial judgment, shall not excuse my pen, since a fear that the result of its use, will be deeply tinged with female imbecility, affords me no lawful repudiation from my promise.

As you doubtless anticipated receiving this in writing, it may be proper for me to give my reasons why it is presented in a different form. To do this I must be indulged with liberty in a short preamble.

After my arrival at my paternal home, in March last, I contemplated the commencement of an epistolary correspondence with you, upon the subject of this little book, by mail. Accordingly I wrote one sheet, designing to forward it immediately, as a beginning; but my mind (for which I could not then account) seemed to close against sending it. Since I came into N. H. on a visit to the place where I followed the example of my blessed Lord in water baptism, I have felt a solemn impression concerning the subject of female public improvement in Gospel testimony, so generally considered ludicrous and contemptible; and by a majority of the professed advocates for christianity denounced against, as anti-scriptural, of course anti-christian, utterly improper, and absolutely degrading to the cause of Zion. Since I parted with my Connecticut friends, I have passed as it were through fire and through water,

in encountering "anathemas" from different quarters, as well as receiving the milder salute of what (I expect) the kind donors would term "faithful christian reproof." Nothing my dear sister, in this part of God's heritage is equal to "a female's" travelling the country with the testimony of Jesus, for monstrosity in schism and heresy, in the judgment of most professors of religion. The only quietudes to some sincere minds, is a faint hope that God will one day appear, and avenge his church, by confounding these female rebels against his apostle's command. 1 Cor xiv. 37. I can say with, an honest heart, that I am willing and waiting for the demolition of anti-christian modes and usages in the visible church of Christ, and if my subject be really one of the heretical class, God grant it may with speed be overthrown, and eternally covered with the impenetrable shades of oblivion, till Zion's warfare be fully accomplished, and her militant state is succeeded by immortal triumph, and eternal glory in the New Jerusalem, the city of the living God!

At present however, I do not view the subject before me, as opposed to the truth as it is in Jesus; nor unfriendly to its influence, rise and prosperity. Let scripture be permitted to speak for itself upon the case before us; and a statute of Jehovah respecting the daughters of Zion, may be read in Joel's

prophecy, 2d chapter 25th verse. But to return from the digression.

I remarked that I have of late felt a solemn impression concerning this subject. I have earnestly desired that a complete discovery of the foundation of "female preaching," might be made, its authenticity proved, or fallacy exposed. If by the standard of christian faith, (the scripture of truth,) its right is enstamped with "thus saith the Lord," and "thus it is written," I wish it might be cherished and supported through all Prince Michael's army, the visible churches. On the contrary, if it is not according to the tenor of the bible, and it can be proved that blessed book forbids it, I can truly say let all christendom unite in pronouncing its doom to eternal banishment from the sacred camp. These views and impressions have induced me to take a more minute and serious survey of scripture ground. I have walked slowly over it, trying to view it through the telescope of faith; which brings far distant objects near, by whose light good Abraham saw the promised land, and discovered the Messiah's day, a church in Gospel purity, what its probable rules and regulations might be.

In this investigation, I am indebted to the letter of revelation in the English language, with the aid and guidance I humbly trust of the spirit of truth. And now my dear sister,

I will come more to the point, by saying that these impressions are accompanied by a manifestation that I shall receive a blessing in venturing on more publicity in attempting a scriptural defence of "female speaking," than by addressing a written transcript of scripture passages as you requested. I have therefore commenced the undertaking, with prayer to Him, who holdeth the stars in his right hand, and walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks, whose eyes are as a flaming fire, and his voice like the sound of many waters, that he will preserve me from indicting ought that may wound the cause of Zion, entreating that the accomplishment of this little work if it should prove no benefit might at least be neutrally harmless.

Others, my dear Julia, have felt doubts and queries in their minds, respecting my subject, similar to what you have experienced; and as anxiously desired to "know the truth for themselves;" and freedom from traditional bondage. To many humble sincerely devoted children of God, and joint heirs with Christ, this little work will be very acceptable, while to others and real saints too it will appear like a root out of dry ground, destitute of order, light or savour; and some characters in standing upon gospel ground as they suppose, but I fear very remote from the true Vine, the righteous Branch will spurn it from

I am persuaded that you, my dear sister, will readily acquit me in your own mind, of any intended wrong in this proceedure. In discussing the subject before me, I am insensible of feeling any or the least opposition to order, regularity and decency in meetings for the worship of GOD. I am deceived in myself, very grossly deceived, if I am offering this to the public litigiously, or with a design to injure the feelings of sincere christians, whose opinion may differ from mine. I wish not to bind a brother, or a sister's conscience, "that to God alone is free." I love pure Gospel liberty. Lord Jesus ever preserve me from abusing it to licentious purposes, or using it for a cloak of maliciousness.

To thee, to thee, my gracious God,
 I lift my heart, and raise my cries,
 O guide me by thy sacred word,
 Thou ever glorious, just and wise!

Direct my heart, my eye, my pen,
 While I the sacred page may scan,
 To prove my theme by thee approv'd,
 That females by thy spirit mov'd,
 May preach the name by Mary lov'd,
 Jesus, the humble sinner's Friend!

And now my dear Julia, methinks I see you and other dear W. friends, glancing an anxious and tearful eye, over these pages solicitous on my account, lest the subject resist my feeble powers, and withering as I touch, becomes to the view of critics, like stubble

side's return, a single wave will instantly consign to oblivion. Alas! in the world we now inhabit, have we not cause to fear, are existing in human bodies, such miserable souls, who are located for long continued and repeated rejection of the humbling truths of scripture, in just, yet awful judgment, already very near the suburbs of hell!

I drop my pen for the present.

LETTER II.

THE sable curtain of night is again with, drawn by a divine hand; and reveals the face of rosy morning. This rolling orb has begun his daily circuit through the skies.

O like the sun may I fulfil,
The appointed duties of the day,
Begin my work betimes, and still
March on the heavenly way.

Through the goodness and mercy of God, my life is still preserved, the brittle thread apparently attenuated by a long course of ill health, is not yet severed by death's pointed lance. How gracious, how kind the hand that upholds me in a militant state, and gives me daily desires to work out my salvation with fear and trembling, believing it is God who worketh in me both to will and to do of

"My God! let all my hours be thine,
 "While I enjoy the light,
 "Then shall my sun in smiles go down,
 "And bring a pleasant night."

I ask a licence, my dear sister, for resuming my pen in the preambuling order; and will now endeavour to pursue a more direct path, till I attain to such proportions of scriptural ground, as are freely legated, and divinely secured to female labourers in the Lord's vineyard, by the sacred inspirer of the blessed volume. "The sure word of prophecy," Glory to God, came not by will of man, but by the power of the Holy Ghost. And "all scripture is given by Almighty inspiration; and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, able also to make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus."—And to continue the apostle's declaration, "whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." O may our minds never be beguiled by the subtilty of satan from the simplicity of truth, contained in this precious word; nor blindly give heed to fables, and endless genealogies, which engender strife and minister unprofitable questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith. Let us adopt king David's language, and pray as he prayed. "Open thou mine eyes O God.

that I may behold wonderful things out of thy law. Order my steps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me. I am a stranger and pilgrim in the earth, hide not thy commandments from me. The entrance of thy word giveth light," adds the Psalmist, "and giveth understanding unto the simple. Thy testimonies I have taken as an heritage forever, for they are the joy and rejoicing of my heart."

As I am about to commence close engagement, a saying of an ancient Prophet, is powerfully presented to my mind; and I am constrained to transcribe the same verbatim; "break up the fallow ground; and sow not among the thorns." The application at present to me, is this. In attempting a scriptural defence of female preaching, it is necessary first to prepare a way of access to minds hedged in by unbelief on the subject, by certain passages of Paul's indicting, which are constantly resorted to by objectors, wherein they suppose their great strength lies. By this allusion and the term "fallow," I would by no means insinuate that the ground occupied by that great apostle, was uncultivated or barren; and overgrown with useless thorns. No, I mean as I advanced in the preceeding sentence, minds, whose soil is chained by the wintry influence of prejudice, where the verdant plant of universal charity cannot flourish. I do not intend to arrogate to my-

self, that special influence, which is the rightful prerogative of Jehovah, whose power alone can soften and subdue the mind. By preparing a way of access, I had in view to use Paul's own expressions, as a key to unlock the door of hearts hitherto fast closed against the subject in question.

When a statute is made, or a commandment given, it is natural and common to notice the character and station of the Lawgiver. In the case just before us, there is no hesitancy concerning its authority on the ground of Paul's character and office. 1. A servant of Jesus Christ. An apostle by the will of God, who preached the everlasting Gospel, in demonstration of the spirit and the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. 2. His labors and sufferings for the truth's sake were abundant above his contemporaries in the blessed work of evangelizing the eastern nations; and who sealed his testimony with his blood. 3. This faithful defendant of the christian faith was a chosen vessel unto God, "to bear his name before the Gentiles, and kings and children of Israel." He was instrumental in planting the Gospel vine, watering the same with his tears, prayers and paternal watch and counsel. At Corinth a famous city of Achaia, styled the glory of Greece, Paul preached the heavenly doctrines of the cross. For the space of eighteen months with eminent suc-

cess, which excited the malice of the Jews, who with one accord made insurrection against the apostle and brought him to the judgment seat. This persecution however, fastened no disgrace upon his character at Corinth, effected no abridgement of his labours, nor hastened his departure from the place. He tarried at Corinth a good while after the tumult raised on his account, took leave of the brethren in peace, sailed into Syria reasoned with the Jews at Ephesus, visited the churches at Cesarea and Antioch, sounded free salvation through all the countries of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples. His extensive travels, incessant exertions, multiplied afflictions, and narrow escapes from "deaths oft," could not efface from his remembrance nor discharge his mind from the care of his children in the faith at Corinth. His anxiety for the safety, peace and happiness of that Church is ardently expressed in two lengthy epistles addressed to them from Philippi, in which are displayed the feelings of his independent mind, untainted with slavish fear of man, and highly dignified by that zeal for his master's cause, which urged him forward to martyrdom and glory. It appears from the contents of the 1st chapter of his epistle, Paul had received some information respecting their spiritual state at Corinth, that excited in his faithful bosom, the mingled emotions of

fear, grief and displeasure, not of a carnal nature; but of a spiritual kind. It appears in his absence, the bond of peace, the unity of the spirit, was unhappily lost, and divisions and contentions entering the sacred camp, threatened ruin to the spiritual house raised at Corinth by the mighty power of God. Paul commences his labor with a Gospel salutation, thanks the Lord for his manifestations of grace mercy and power among them, entreats them by the sacred name of Jesus, to live in peace, and declares to them, the emptiness and worthlessness of high attainments, and brilliant gifts, if destitute of heaven born charity. In the eleventh chapter of his first epistle, the holy man with confidence and authority calls upon them to be followers of him, even as he also is of God, and commends their remembrance of him, and attention to the ordinances of the Gospel, yet blends reproof and counsel with the commendation; and with special reference to the Lord's supper, which solemn act of commemorating the Saviour's passion, had by some unworthy persons at Corinth been converted into revelling and drunkenness. From the 4th to the 13th verse, the apostle gives direction concerning praying and prophesying, in which women are not forbid to pray and prophesy; but not with their heads uncovered. The 11th verse intimates a mutual dependance in the Church of Christ,

resting on either sex, while the last clause of the 12th, gives all the result to God, who is indeed the great first cause, and last end of all things. The 12th chapter, treats upon spiritual gifts, their diversity as to outward form and propriety; but united in one and the self same spirit, and in operation for the same cause the apostle in a figure describes the mystical body of Christ, his church, purchased by his own blood, as possessing hand, foot, head eye, &c. all necessary, none to be despised. Now I can never for one moment, my dear sister, entertain so cruel a surmise against this eminent apostle of the lamb, as a design to separate our sex from this spiritual and now suffering body. It does not appear to me at all probable that Paul, when he addressed the Corinthian believers held a contrary mind to his views expressed to the church at Galatia, the year preceding to which he wrote thus, "For ye are ALL children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.—There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither MALE nor FEMALE, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Paul was not one who would readily set about to build the things he had been trying to destroy. He loved liberty in the gospel of Jesus; but he dreaded its abuse to serve the carnal, lustful mind of half hearted professors, who refused to wear

the yoke of self-denial. To return to the 12th chapter; the apostle says, "there are many members but one body." And again, by reversal, "the body is not one member but many." Again, as the body natural is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are still one body, so also is Christ. His mystical body, the church, is one, composed of many members; and each member has its office as in the members of these clay bodies, which now bear about our precious souls. I have confidence in the dear apostle, that he never intended to disjoint the body of Christ, for the purpose of casting away from the labor and use, and privileges of that body, the honest and faithful daughters of the Lord Almighty. Nay, he regards those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, as necessary for service, and sums up the whole matter in this language. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." I pass to the 14th chapter, that contains the apostle's supposed interdiction, against female speaking, or preaching, as it is called. This chapter was certainly very peculiarly interesting to the Corinthian church, as suited to their situation, from the 2d to the end of the 23d verse; the subject relates to a gift then in operation, which at present is entirely unknown in the Christian churches, viz. "the gift of tongues." Paul in the pre-

ceding chapter, foretold its decease, it has long since been fulfilled, they were for a sign and endured but for a season, since the effect so wonderful a gift appeared to produce, was spiritual pride in its recipients, of all the hydra the most awful. I grant, however, that this chapter should be read, and respected as a portion of Scripture, not altogether the property of the church to which it was primarily addressed, but in many respects suited to the state of Christ's church at the present day. Would to God, every public teacher of religion in America, yea, through all the world, were constrained to follow clearly ^{the} dear apostle in the 15th verse. If this were the case, and the churches under such discipline, formal heartless ceremonies would cease. If every professed disciple would be governed by the principle contained in the 20th verse, ignorant, careless, contentious characters would become measurably wise and amiable.

But to return. In the 34th verse, Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they are commanded to be under subjection, *as also, saith the law.*" I am free my dear Julia, from any fear of the passage before my eyes, and willing to render the reasons why, suggested to my understanding, by drawing comparisons from other parts of scripture, and giv-

ing also, what I sincerely believe was the apostle's meaning, when he wrote the passage. It will however, best suit my purpose, to commence with the last clause in the verse, "As also saith the law." This circumlocution, I beg you will excuse, with every other defect, since I still abide by my determination, to do the best I can in giving you a transcript of scriptural evidence in favor of female improvement in the gospel of Christ.

I must however, cease from writing, for the present, compelled by fatigue.

I am your's sincerely.



LETTER III.

I RESUME my pen, with a willing mind, to pursue my subject. This morning the air is delightful, a variety of objects meet my view, and appear joined in concert, most sweetly to praise the hand that made all the wheels of nature first, and keeps them still in motion. I am now situated just by the sea shore; here I behold a grand display of the majesty and power of God, his wonders in the deep—I rise early in the morning for the purpose of inhaling the refreshing salt breeze, which is strongly recommended by medical friends, as salutary to my debilitated frame. I assure you, my dear sister, that my mind is al-

ready benefited, by the prospect around me ; the glowing sun emits his sparkling rays upon the whitened bosom of the rolling waters, and is a faint emblem of those brighter beams, which dart from the Morning Star, upon the crystal river proceeding out of the eternal throne. This sun I now behold, will set one day to rise no more, but Jesus the morning star, the sun of righteousness, will shine on that pure river, that waters Paradise, so long as the throne of God endures. As I gaze, my heart pants, for preparation and fitness, and liberty to leave this dull clog of clay, and all terrestrial beauty, which must eventually perish, and go where Jesus is gone, to behold his glory, the glory which he had with his Father before ever the world was. John xvii. 5. I feel myself to be a poor ignorant being, understanding comparatively very little indeed about God ; " such knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is high, I cannot attain unto it. It is high as heaven, deeper than hell, in measure longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." I have neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy. Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended ? who hath gathered the wind in his fists ? who hath bound the waters, or given to the ocean a perpetual decree, saying, thus far shalt thou come, but no farther ; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." In all my meditations

upon the being, and character of God, my mind is lost in wonder, and separate a moment from the mild Mediator that wonder is blended with an awful dread. One look into the Bethlehem manger, revives my courage, and by faith I can see, from my Redeemer's cradle to his cross, the footsteps of a God of love. O let us pray more, for that knowledge of the holy one, which Christ declared was eternal life.

Now to my proper subject. I am first to attend to the apostle Paul's quotation to the law, in verse 34 of the 14th Chapter of the 1st epistle to the Corinthians. "As also saith the law." Here, my dear sister, I am happily situated ; in the first place, although I am desirous of being a disciple in the New Testament school, and consider the abrogation of the ceremonial law a distinguished blessing, yet I never experienced an immersion in spiritual baptism, that buried me beyond the reach of the moral law of God, contained in the old Testament. The great Saviour of lost and perishing souls, by whose name alone we must be saved, honoured his Father's law, as was foretold of him, he magnified it and made it honorable. Isa. xlii. 20. How faithfully he expounded the moral law given to ancient Israel, through Moses, as mediator, by his Father ! How perfect a transcript of its holiness, justice and goodness, was his spotless life ! and what an

exemplification of the value placed upon the law in the eternal mind, was his ignominious and cruel death, by which alone the penalty due to its offenders could be paid ! The passage in question, however, has I apprehend, immediate reference to the law given by the mouth of God, to Eve, after her rebellion in Eden. Paul's reference, was probably to the last clause of the 16th verse, of the 3d chapter of Genesis. I feel very complacent toward it my dear Julia, and wish my sex to remember the command, and submit to the divine will in this decree, "he shall rule over thee ;" and I have a strong determination within myself to obey ; and whenever the whole of male christendom shall forbid women to open their lips in meetings for christian worship, a seal is put upon mine ; but as long as I can find a branch of Christ's church free upon the subject, and I feel the testimony roll through my soul, I pray God to strengthen me to proclaim my Saviour's love to sinners, rehearse the terms of the gospel, and exhort my dear fellow beings to yield obedience to him ; and this I call being in subjection to God and man.— But as our beloved brother Paul has referred so particularly to the law, making, it seems, no new statute but enforcing the old, I can say, 2dly, I am happily situated, because, under the dispensation of the law, females were honored with distinguished

manifestations of divine regard; and this from the beginning of the Creation of this world. I shall take the liberty to go back as far as I possibly can, and take possession of the first spot of ground I may find, that will bear the weight of evidence in favor of female interest in God's esteem and favor.—But in the first place, I give this challenge as universal; examine the whole of the Old Testament, search every dividend of the three great branches of Jehovah's law, moral, judicial and ceremonial, and if possible, produce a single passage that intimates to woman, thou shalt not speak in my name, saith thy God. If any person were to answer me, that ministering in the old tabernacle, was confined to the tribe of Levi, I should not conceive this against me, because Moses did not say, your women must not serve God; but more of this by and by.

Now let us turn to the revelation concerning the origin of this frail, despised sex, called the weaker vessel."—To the law and its witnesses.

In the beginning, God created man in his own image, in the image of God, created he him, male and female created he them. Gen. i. 27. It is written that the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground. The most humble, or I might say, the meanest article of the six day's creation, was chosen for the archetypal of the body of man; small

particles of earth, by volition and power of the august Architect of the universe, were transmuted, and produced a body, into which the Lord God infused a living soul, by his own spirit. Then God planted a delightful garden, placed the man there to dress and keep it, gave him every desirable privilege ; and also a law, with its penalty if broken.—It was shortly determined in the Infinite mind, that a second creation of a rational intelligent order, was necessary for the comfort and usefulness of this lonely mortal in Eden's blooming inclosure. Accordingly it is announced "It is not good for man to be alone ; I will make" what saith the Lord God ? a servant, to sit at the feet of man, and do him homage ? or a slave to perform all his task, in dressing the garden, and preserving order among the rich variety of plants and shrubs, the trees and vines, that were of God's implanting, while his fair, healthy and strong nerved body, reposed in some cool arbour in Paradise, regaled at his ease with the soft carol of celestial songsters, wooed thither from the upper Eden, to chaunt praise over the yet unmarred product of their own maker's power and skill ? No—I will make, saith God, an help meet for him. Gen. ii. 18. Observe the title given to the then uncreated fair, by the blessed maker of all things. "A help meet"—an equal—a partner—a companion—an assistant. I re-

ally wish this subject was duly attended to by each respective connection in their age. Then husbands would honour the wife—the wife reverence her husband, the brother respect his sister, and the latter her brother, &c. To return—we must attend to the creation of the man's expected bride. Now the ground upon which he treads, is not used, a bone of that bright form, in whose unsullied veins as yet, no earthly current moves, laid the foundation for a superstructure, that should exhibit a cherub's bloom, and charm his manly soul to softest sympathy and tenderest love. This lovely piece of clay was quickened by an affusive act of the same divine breath, which made the man a living soul, and presented to him for a help meet in Eden's blooming garden. Thus closed the work of creation. Woman was the latest offspring of omnipotence. And this is the root of the generation of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him, male and female created he them, and blessed them in the day when they were created, and called their name Adam. It must be conceded, that in a state of innocency, there was a perfect equality between the sexes. By their disobedience they incurred a several punishment, and sustained a common loss. Beguiled by the subtlety of lucifer in a serpent's disguise, the woman when absent from her companion,

consented to try the taste and effect of the prohibited fruit. Alas ! she was awfully deceived by the malicious foe to her innocence and peace, and gave this fallen cherub an opportunity to exult over creation's woe ! We are sensible of Eve's lamentable defection, and mourn her aggravated guilt in tempting Adam the first, the grandest object of God's creation, to follow her wicked example, we cannot refuse to pity his weakness, in listening to the feeble voice of a female, not so old and experienced as himself, which called upon him to commit an act, forbid by his Maker, while his fair enticer was in his side a silent rib. For one, I am rather inclined to be wroth with Adam, for his neglect of and absence from the fair being lately presented him by the Lord God, whose companion it was designed he should constantly be. It was his duty to watch over, and protect her from harm, if there could be such a thing apprehended in their innocent state. However not to become monotonous beyond endurance, I will notice their deserved sentence, which I hope will re-introduce me to my subject, or to a gentle slope toward it ; for I am become tedious to myself. The discovery of their offence is immediately succeeded by a righteous sentence, to punishment for their joint crime, to Eve first administered as the precedent in guilt ; for I did not intend to notice the serpent, yet I

necessarily must, since the threatened vengeance his just due, was auspicial of final deliverance from woe to the race of Adam. To Adam the Lord God assigned toil and care through life, with the pangs, of death. To the woman, sickness and pain, subjection to man's controul, and multiplied sorrows.— In this cup of woe, which was now proffered to the guilty pair, was mingled a cordial mercy drop, to keep them from despair the promised seed, which should bruise the foul tempter's head, and lay him deep in hell forever! We find very little account in Scripture of Adam and Eve; after this they became parents, and apparently suffered severely, because the dignity of their family was marred with fratricide and banishment. The best passage I can find which relates to the first pair, is Eve's acknowledging Abel's birth as a gift from the Lord. Shall I take the liberty to say, that I view poor Adam in the fall (as it is named) sunk quite as low as his companion? I think he is. Now, though no promise is addressed to him particularly I am willing they should rise together; and in Christ the promised seed, enjoy spiritually under the Gospel, what they would naturally, if the first command (thou shalt not eat, &c.) had never been violated, mutual blessings, equal rights, and united christian privileges. And I am also, entirely willing, that man should retain without molestation, all the rule

and authority which he can justly claim in righteousness, over households, churches and nations, and desire every female to say amen. But I do feel reluctant to any cowardly retreat on the female part from legal ground granted by God, and anciently occupied and cultivated by pious, wise and courageous women.

We will leave Adam and Eve now, quietly to occupy their portion of dust, till the last loud trumpet sound, and travel further on scripture ground, to see what entertainment women receive under the law, and how they behave. Nine successive generations pass over the stage of action, and the tenth introduces a very remarkable character, in whose day astonishing events take place. When God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and that every imagination of his heart was only evil continually, it repented the Lord that he had made man upon the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping things, and the fowls of the air, for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. The destruction threatened, did not immediately descend upon the guilty inhabitants of the old world, God endured with much long suffering, their grievous sins. At length the deluge came,

and swept away a world lying in wickedness, with only a reserve of eight human souls.— In this salvation we discover an equal distribution of divine merey to male and female, ere the fountain of the great deep was broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened and the rain poured upon the earth, Noah entered the ark prepared in obedience to God for the saving of his house, with his wife, his three sons, with their wives, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, &c. &c. two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life. And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded; and the Lord shut them in.

Perhaps to many persons there appears no connection between this solemn transaction and the particular subject I aim to vindicate. A careless reader might say, as a certain formalist did not long since, concerning a child of God, who had been crying down youthful pride and vanity in testimony “the woman meddles with things that do not belong to her.” But you my dear sister will agree with me, that the ark was typical of Christ, and the eight human souls constituted his visible church, small indeed in comparison with the multitudes lately overwhelmed in the deluge; but God is a sovereign, and a just one also—he gives account of his matters to none.

“Deep in unfathomable mines,
Of never failing skill,
He treasures up his bright design,
And works his secret will.”

These eight persons, preserved from present and temporal ruin, I believe constituted the church of God; small as it was, we find it was not free from offence. One of its members for very unnatural and unfeeling behaviour, towards his father, is loaded with a heavy curse: And alas! even the aged patriarch was overtaken by temptation in the vale of years. How frail is man! in his best estate altogether vanity! But I must endeavour to adhere more closely to my proper subject. In this little Church, there is evinced an equal regard to the sexes, male and female. Now certainly there was an opportunity for a display of righteous sovereignty, if the Divine Glory had (speaking after the manner of men) a prospect of great advancement by the instrumentality of males only; and women were not allowed to co-operate with them in public service, the Almighty could easily have supplied his church with male servants, even if he resorted to the stones or stumps, to produce them; for John Baptist in his day told the Jews that God was able to do such things. See Matt. iii, 9. If men are esteemed so far before women in the judgment of God, who knoweth all things, why did he not save in the ark, seven men, and only one woman? The equation in number of each

sex in the salvation, teaches me, that God held to his primary purpose, which was, that woman should be an help meet for man, and not a servant or slave. In a state of innocence man was doing God's work, and Eve was given to him for an assistant in that service. In Gospel grace, certainly an equal providence is over mortals, and in this vineyard is work enough for all, and none are to be excused. I feel a sweet peace in my heart, my dear sister, when I am willing to labor in the Lord, and endeavour to be active in his blessed cause. While I blush and am ashamed of my own unworthiness, I think I can say, I glory in the cross of Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world. Farewell.



LETTER IV.

NOAH fell asleep in the nine hundred and fiftieth, or fifty-first year of his age, and his name is enrolled in the list of worthies, who died in the faith. Nine generations from him passed over the stage of human life, without any remarkable visitation of grace and glory to the human family, discovered to us by written revelation. The tenth introduces Abraham, who becomes the father of a multitude. With him the Lord entered into

special covenant, and his seed after him.—The apostle to the Hebrews in the 6th Chap. represents the strength of this covenant, equal to the foundation of the eternal throne. It was framed with an oath to Abraham, the same confirmed unto Isaac, and insured unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant. Is there no attention paid to the “weaker vessel,” in this important transaction? What saith God to Abraham, after he had changed his name, from Abram (a high father) to Abraham (father of a multitude,) and enjoined upon him the rite of circumcision? Read verse 15 and 16 of the 17th Chap. of Genesis. “And God said unto Abraham, as for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai (my dame) but Sarah (princess) shall her name be. And I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations, kings of people shall be of her.” Abraham was to be father, and Sarah a mother of nations, a blessed equality. Abraham’s son and successor in the church, was a subject of promise ere he was born: in the same grace was his wife Rebekah interested, with a prophetic energy surely, the brethren of the fair Rebekah, pronounced a parting blessing, when she was about to depart from her native country: Gen. xxiv, 60. “Be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.” No doubt can be

entertained of their reference to the Messiah.

In pursuing scripture history in quest of further evidence of God's favorable notice of females, we discover nothing very special, till we arrive at the river's brink, where lay a lovely babe in its rush cradle, weeping from a sense of hunger and cold. A young Egyptian Princess was the honored instrument of saving the life of this Hebrew babe. Its infantine sorrowful state, so deeply affected her heart, that to appearance her father's cruel edict was forgotten, or unheeded. An infant's tears prevailed over Egypt's haughty monarch's dread command. And the damsel named the rescued babe Moses, for said she, I drew him out of the water. I hope this dear lady was saved among the mixed multitude, who fled out of Egypt with the children of Israel; and I trust she was. She was the temporal saviour of Jeshuren's king elect, and leader of God's church.

Miriam's name is announced amid the celebration of the victory obtained over Pharaoh and his proud host, when Israel sang praise for delivering power, on the banks of the Red Sea. The recital of the sufferings of God's ancient people, in the land of Egypt, the wonders wrought by almighty power, on their behalf, and for their rescue, is without a parallel in the historic page. Micah, the Morasthite, who prophesied in the days of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah,

in reminding rebellious Israel, of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage and tyranny, mentions their leaders, saying "I sent before thee Moses, Aaron and Miriam. Micah vi. 5. Who will presume to cast a sneer of reproach toward this triumvirate on account of the name of Miriam? Who will dare reprove the Lord Almighty for enduing her with the spirit of prophecy, and conferring upon her the sacred title due to that spirit? Who will find fault with Moses, for permitting his sister, the prophetess to shout praise to God, among such a multitude of people, six thousand Israelites, &c. a mixed multitude beside?"

The next public female character, and highly distinguished in the annals of the rightful proprietors of the law, the Jews, as saith the apostle ("to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, &c.") is Deborah the wife of Lapidoth." The introduction to her history reads thus. Judges Chap. 4.— "And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, when Moses was dead. And the Lord sold them into the hands of Jabin, king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor, the captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosbeth of the Gentiles, he had nine hundred chariots of iron, and mightily oppressed the children of Israel." Twenty years of suffering under the rod of correction by a heathen Prince, passed over the re-

bellious and smitten people of Jehovah's choice among all the inhabitants of the globe. Amos iii. 1, 2. "How often they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies, they dealt unfaithfully like their forefathers, they were turned aside like a deceitful bow, they provoked God to anger with their high places and moved him to jealousy with their graven images, then he was wroth and greatly abhorred Israel, therefore he delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand. Many times he delivered them."—At the time of my heroine's introduction to the prophetic office, the Israelites are represented earnest in prayer to God; and in answer to their cries for a deliverer, Deborah arose a mother in Israel. Once they could boast, that God came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran and came with cherubic troops. But now they must receive counsel from a female, obey the word as she dispenses it from beneath her verdant dwelling, a palm tree between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim, or remain in bondage to the king of Canaan still. Their soul was melted because of long oppression, and they submitted to receive a remittance from suffering, even by the hand of a woman.

Deborah gave directions concerning the march of the army of Israel, designated the

number (ten thousand,) and the tribes, (Zebulun and Naphthali.) To complete the same we behold Deborah, compelled by the entreaties of Barak, commander in chief in Israel at that time, marching with him at the head of an army, to Kedesh. When the morning arrived of that memorable day that witnessed the destruction of Sisera and his host, "Deborah gave to Barak the word of command, saying up, for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand. Is not the Lord gone out before thee? Arise Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam." Deborah's commands were obeyed, all her prophecy was fulfilled, Sisera and his host destroyed, and peace again to Israel restored. Deborah judged the children of her people forty years; and during this lapse, the land had rest. With respect to Lapidoth, the husband of this illustrious woman, we are left in suspense as to his approbation of his wife or the reverse, as scripture is silent. The literal signification of his name is lamp or lightning; but he emits no ray of light to us, so we must leave him. Concerning Deborah's song, if so indifferent a judge of poesy as myself, might be allowed to give an opinion, I should say it was suitable company for David's harp

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at least ; and if I breathe out my inmost thought of its excellence, I would invite some rosy cherub to chaunt its measures upon a lute of lucid gold in the immediate presence of Israel's conquering King.

Deborah's sainted dust, reposes for aught I know, beneath the shady palm tree, that was formerly a shade for her judgment seat ; so I bid thee farewell sage mother—sleep on till the last loud trumpet shall awake the silent dead ; then mayest thou come forth to sing again “ Praise to the Lord for the avenging of Israel,” and “ tune thy harp near the Redeemer's throne.”

I should not feel justified in passing silently by the name of Jael, wife to Heber the Kenite, whose ingenuity and fortitude were remarkably exerted and wonderfully prosperous in laying low in death, Israel's potent foe. In Deborah's song, this event is celebrated. “ Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber be—blessed shall she be above women in the tent. He asked water, and she gave him milk, she brought forth butter in a lordly dish. She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workman's

hammer, and with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head when she had pierced and stricken through his temples. At her feet he bowed, he fell." In vain does his fond mother expect her warlike son's return, in vain she looks through the lattice, and sigh, Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariot? For Sisera lay breathless at a woman's feet.

The next female character in Scripture, that attracts my attention, and challenges my pen, is a lovely young widow, a native of Moab. I think I may be allowed to say, that the master grace which was so predominant in the character of Jesus, from his cradle to Bethany, when he parted with his disciples, on his return back to heaven, even sweet dove eyed meekness and humility, was exhibited in the life of Ruth, more complete than in any other scripture human character. Her behaviour from the first knowledge we take of her, to the latest information we receive, is marked with heavenly modesty, celestial peace, and the tenderest filial love. I never read, or repeat, or meditate upon her expressive expostulation with, and declaration to the bereaved Naomi, without feeling mingled emotions of admiration and sympathy.

thy. "Entreat me not to leave thee," nor to return to my native land. My Chilion can rest beneath the sod without me. Thou bereaved of husband and sons, and descending the rugged steep of age, dost need my service. Thy whitened locks, my mother, the lines of sorrow in thy grief worn countenance, thy feeble limbs, attract my sympathy and command my care. I will go with thee, if thy home and lodging be mean and poor, thy faithful Ruth will share its gloom; and I will love the people of thy land, and worship the God of Israel. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried.— They journey on toward Naomi's country, and enter Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest. We soon find Ruth a humble gleaner in the field of Boaz; and from that lowly station, and arduous service, she is ere long exalted to the character of spouse to the lord of the land, Boaz the great-grand-father of king David. The amiable qualities of her mind and disposition, afford a mild lustre to the reputation of Ruth: but in her conversion to the true God, I view her in a more conspicuous, grand, majestic character. She was a Gentile by birth, born and educated in Moab. Moses died there, according to the word of the Lord; but his sepulchre is

unknown. Moab was a heathenish country, filled with foul idolatry. Chemosh was a name for their prime god, which is called the abomination of Moab, for whom Solomon (in his old age, when his heart was seduced away from Jehovah, to go after these Gods) built an high place on a hill near Jerusalem. Israel after the death of Jair, forsook the Lord, and went after false gods, the abomination of Syria, Zidon, Moab and Ammen, &c. In this wicked land Ruth drew her first breath, passed the years of childhood, and entered the marriage state, with a native Hebrew, followed him to an early grave, and felt a widow's woe. When we hear from her lips a resolution to serve Naomi's God, our hearts leap for joy that this wild olive of heathen forest growth, is severed from the corrupt native stock, and engrafted into the vine of Zion, the planting of God Almighty. I view her, my dear sister, a type of the Gentile Church; and it strikes my mind that David, when he prophesied concerning the glories of Christ's kingdom, in the 45 Psalm, entitled a song of loves, addressed a call to the Gentiles: "Hearken O daughter and consider, and incline thine ear, forget also thine own people, and thy father's house, so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty, for he is thy

Lord, and worship thou him. Christ is the Lord here spoken of, and he is the Saviour of Jew and Gentile. In my imagination, I have heard Ruth in relating her experience, declare that she had received this blessed call by the spirit of God, and was determined to obey ; but I shall appear very extravagant, if I continue to indulge my pen in this strain ; therefore I bid thee adieu, thou christian bride in Bethlehem, the birth place of thy Saviour and mine.

Farewell, for a short season, my dear Julia.

LETTER FIFTH.

I NOW come to the house of God in Shiloh, and meet within the consecrated walls, a praying female, Hannah the wife of Elkanah, whose name, signifies the zeal of God. He is represented as a spiritual worshipper, and in his yearly excursions to Shiloh, to visit the temple and sacrifice unto the Lord, he was accompanied by his beloved wife, Hannah, whose name means, gracious. This woman prayed in the temple, and her prayer is recorded in scripture. It is perfectly accordant with the language of the true saints of God in all ages, ascribing to Jehovah the every righteous attribute, and exulting in the manifestations of his mercy toward herself. In Hannah's prayer, or song, I see portrayed the holiness and immutability of God, verse 2 ; his omniscience, his justice, verse 3 ; power, 4, 5 ; his care and protection over his children, 9. David prayed " wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living ?" Hannah said, " He did keep the feet of his saints." A part of the gospel armour is prepared for the feet. I find Hannah's praying in the temple, her sa-

sacrifice, service and song were very acceptable to the Lord; and her son was an eminent prophet and priest of God.

I pass on to the reign of good Josiah, the son and successor of wicked Amon, who in the eighteenth year of his reign, being twenty-seven years old, gave orders for repairing the house of the Lord. The king sent Shaphan, the scribe, with a message to Hilkiah, the priest; and from Hilkiah received the book of the law, which the priest had found in the house of the Lord. Shaphan brought the book to the king; and read it in his presence. On hearing the contents of the book of the law this tender hearted prince rent his clothes in seeming agony. He issued a command that Hilkiah the priest, with four others, go and enquire of the Lord, for him and all his subjects, concerning the words of the book that was found. Here I must be indulged in a little digression. The consternation and surprise of king Josiah at this juncture, are evidences that he never saw or heard the statutes of God before, with his bodily senses. Probably it was lost among the rubbish that was suffered to defile the neglected temple, during the reign of his wicked grandfather, of fifty and five years

continuance, and continued till his idolatrous father slept the sleep of death, (by conspiracy of his own servants) in the garden of Uzza; and he exalted by the people of his land, to the throne in Jerusalem. But it is evident he had the law written in his heart, for the historian testifies of his piety declaring "he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the way of his godly ancestor, Royal David; and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left." As soon however, as the book, which contained the words of a written law, by Jehovah on Mount Sinai given, was presented to this amiable young prince, and he listened to its contents, its witness to the inward principles implanted by God in his *secret* mind; and the abominations he knew had been committed by Israel, in defiance of its precepts and commands, excited very great distress; and he desired immediately to apply for instruction to the great supreme author of that law.

To whom does the king send?—Answer—He desires Hilkiash to "go enquire of the Lord." The priest obeys—and we will leave the king, to wrestle with God, on behalf of his guilty people, to follow the footsteps of Hilkiash, as he goes to enquire of the Lord—he enters the doors of the College in Jerusa-

Iem, with his four men, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan and Asahiah. Who has the oracle or word of the Lord, within these ancient walls? Samuel, the venerable seer, who wielded the anointing horn, sleeps quietly at Ramah. Elijah's feet were taken from the banks of Jordan, and he is gone up to heaven in a chariot of fire. Elisha, his anointed successor in the prophetic office, sickened and died in Samaria, and moulders in a sepulchre there. Isaiah finished his testimony in Hezekiah's day, and sealed it by his blood. His body was sawn asunder; and if we hear the sound of his voice at all, it echoes from beneath the altar, at the opening of the fifth seal. "How long O Lord, holy and true, ere thou wilt avenge my painful death, my innocent blood, upon the enemies of thy word?"

Who, we ask again, has the oracle of God, in the day when king Josiah sent his messengers to enquire. I will apply to the scripture. "And Hilkiah, and they that the king had appointed went to Huldah, THE prophetess, the wife of Shallum, the son of Tikvah, the son of Hasrah keeper of the wardrobe; now she dwelt in Jerusalem, in the college, and they commune with her. A woman!

consulted by the messengers of Judah's royal monarch, on a subject of such vast importance! "the weaker vessel," "weak things of the world," called of God, glory to his great name; and he will continue to call upon them, and place his word upon their lips as often as he pleases; and man cannot prevent it. Shall we take a view of Huldah's behaviour in this instance? I cannot discern any embarrassment or hesitancy and backwardness about her. With apparent composure, solemnity, and becoming resolution, she pronounces her reply:—"Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, tell you the man that sent you to me, thus saith the Lord, behold I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the curses that are written in the book, which they have read before the king of Judah; because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands: therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon this place and shall not be quenched." My dear sister, this is solemn preaching, sharp as a two edged sword—and from a female's lips! In this day of abounding iniquity, when the love of many is grown cold; and spiritual idolatry breathes its pestiferous

power into the very bowels of the visible, modern Israel, should a poor female thus cry out *woe*, she would be esteemed an usurper over man, a disturber of the peace of the churches ; some would call it wild fire, and warn people against the reception of her testimony, calling it an "unclean thing," others name her a "Farnhamite," and others praying she might be healed herself, before she attempted to probe and cleanse the wounds in Zion !

To return to Huldah. She now declares to the waiting messengers, God's word for Josiah.

"And as for the king of Judah, who sent you to enquire of the Lord, so shall you say unto him, thus saith the Lord God of Israel, concerning the words which thou hast heard. Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou hadst his word against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbled thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me ; I have heard thee, saith the Lord. Behold I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt go to thy grave in peace ; neither shall thine eyes see all the

evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same." Here ends her message.

Hilkiah and his companions take their leave of the inspired female, and return to the palace of Josiah, to bring him the word. He, the king, appeared to receive Huldah's message, with the humility of a little child, while his instant and unwearied exertions, in reformation labor, displayed manly energy, with kingly authority, and add a new and fairer lustre to his christian character. I have thought the language of the apostle John might have been truly applied to this youthful reformer, had he been contemporary with that beloved disciple of the Lord, 1st Epistle General, ii, 14; for certainly it is manifest "he was strong, had the word of God abiding in him," and was a signal overcomer already. The measures he took in regard to a reformation, his covenanting anew with God, keeping the passover, and his liberality are recorded in the book of the history of the kings of Israel. Huldah's prophecy was verified to him; and also the older prophecy that issued from the mouth of a man of God at Bethel, in Jereboam's reign, who had there set up a golden calf, and caus-

ed Israel to sin. Josiah went early from works to rewards, the archers pierced him in the valley of Megiddo, and he expired ere he reached Jerusalem; there he was buried in one of the sepulchres of his ancestors, and lamented by Jeremiah and all Judah and Jerusalem; and all the singing men and singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations, and made them an ordinance in Israel; and behold they are written in the lamentations. And the sacred historian asserts, that the annals of Jewish kings furnish no character, his equal in devotion to his God, neither before nor after him. Happy prince, whose memory is blessed, it is "like the light of the morning, when the sun ariseth, even a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain," such was thy government, and such is thy memory too.

But Josiah's piety could not avert from rebellious Judah, the just judgments of God due to the ingratitude and foul idolatry of that highly favoured people. The decree had gone forth from the mouth of the Lord in Manassah's reign, and its accomplishment was near at hand, when his pious grandson was slain at Megiddo; the line of destruc-

tion was stretched over Jerusalem ; and the plummet laid thereto. The temple concerning which, the Lord had said, "my name shall be there," the royal palace, and every great man's house in the city, became fuel for the malice of Babel's perverse and impious king. Jerusalem's massy walls were prostrated by the battle axe of the Chaldean army, who also brake in pieces the pillars of brass, that were in the house of the Lord, the bases and brazen sea, placed there by Solomon, did the brutal Chaldeans break in pieces, and carry off to Babylon. The golden vessels, and vessels of brass and silver, with which they ministered when the law was kept, were taken away by the captain of the Chaldean guard. Ah! methinks I hear the prophetic voice of Isaiah, lamenting over the approaching ruin, which he saw affected as it were in vision. "Our holy and our beautified house, where our fathers praised thee, is burnt up with fire; and all our pleasant things are laid waste." It would be natural for me to dwell upon this subject some time my dear sister, if I could be allowed to spiritualize it; for the captivity of the daughter of Zion, is a theme over which my mourning heart often broods, in secret sighs and groans and prayers. O that thou

wouldest rend the heavens, Great God, make bare thy holy arm, and come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, to make thy name known to thine adversaries that the nations may tremble at thy presence! and the whole world acknowledge that verily thou art God in Israel!

I return to my subject. The fulfilment of Huldah's prophecy, is a sufficient proof of the authenticity of the message she delivered to Hilkiah, prefaced with a "thus saith the Lord God of Israel;" for this was the test, a trial of prophecy, time immemorial; and Huldah's certainly was weighty in the balance of truth. Thus we see, women under the dispensation of the law did not keep silence, but made mention of the name of the Lord, in solemn prophetic strains. No Jewish priest or seer, no royal king or ruler, ever attempted to impose silence upon ancient women of God, in old Testament scripture account. I would charitably believe that no christian female at the present day, is aspiring after greater liberty than my heroines enjoyed in theirs; and it is my ardent prayer, that Christ's dear church may never again be infested with female disciples of correspondent character with those at Corinth,

when Paul justly reproved and commanded to silence in the church.

LETTER VI.

As I have noticed in former epistles, several female scripture characters who were not entitled prophetesses of the Lord, but objects of divine favor and notice in his ancient church, I am not willing to pass silently by the fair and favoured queen of the famous Ahasuerus, who reigned from India to Ethiopia, renowned for the riches and temporal glory of his kingdom, and the honor of his liberal disposition, and his excellent majesty. No, beauteous gentle fair, I shall not leave thee in the shade if I can avoid it; for thou wast an honored instrument in averting ruin from thousands of thy fellow mortals, yes, a whole nation might call thee a female Saviour!

Esther it appears was an orphan, her name signifies secret; and her birth place with the names of her father and mother, were secluded from Ahasuerus. She possessed a very faithful guardian, and tender friend, in her cousin, Mordecai, who when her parents died adopted Esther for his own daughter.— She was fair and beautiful. I cannot avoid the mention of another name given to Esther, which I conclude was hers in infancy.— Hadassah, which is “a myrtle tree.” This plant possesses two pleasing qualifications: Its leaf is ever verdant, and it is rare: Its scarcity, and unchangeable hue may allow it a comparison with true virtue, and the erect position of the stem proceeding from the root, is indicative of firmness and decision. In Esther’s character we read these superior excellences; and rejoice she was not always secreted from usefulness and applause. Mordecai, was a mournful captive exile from Jerusalem. He now dwelt in Shushan, the palace, it is probable a domestic in the king’s household. I have always when reading the book entitled Esther, fancied I could discern amid the obscurity which is around the path of Mordecai, a truly magnanimous character. To me the name conveys also the situation of his mind. Mordecai (bitterness:)—

Near the royal gate my fancy views reclining,
 This "woe begone exile" from his native country,
 Mingling his sighs with the whispering gale of evening,
 Weeping for Zion.

See the "big tear drop," while his soul remembers
 Jerusalem, his native desolated country,
 And recollects the night when the fierce Assyrian army,
 Laid low its glory.

Listen to his voice, while strains of bitter anguish
 Flow from a soul allied to deepest sorrow,
 No return to Salem can I ever look for,
 "Land of my fathers."

Yet to my faithful and lacerated bosom,
 Thou art still dear, and often memory dwells on
 Thy once dazzling glories, exceeding other lands, by
 Gift of Jehovah.

When Esther was elected as successor to
 offending, banished Vashti, doubtless the
 bosom of Mordecai, was agitated by alter-
 nate emotions of hope and fear. While the
 uncommon beauty and delicacy of Esther's
 person and manners, the sweetness of her
 natural docile mind and disposition; and the
 obedient respect and submission in all her
 deportment hitherto toward him, as the pro-
 tector of her orphaned youth, inspired in his
 heart a hope that she would endure the blaze
 of royal favor, and continue amiable Esther

still: yet we suspect Mordecai had some fear that her exaltation and court life, might have an unhappy influence upon her youthful heart, and decoy her into the maze of pride. About nine years had gone their revolution, since Esther became queen to Ahasuerus, before any striking event takes place in her life, as recorded in Scripture. It is probable she was, to the king's view, an object of delight, and confidence. No breach of duty on her part, or severity and coldness upon his, have ever appeared to mar their union, and blight their joys.

But Satan cannot suffer his subjects to continue quiet, and to be idlers in his wicked service: he could not bear to see the measure of comfort afforded to the mournful Jewish exile, by the peace and prosperity of his darling cousin, and the envious serpent longed to see the wounded heart of Mordecai bleed afresh; and even to behold him and Esther too hanging upon a gallows. A base heathen, Haman by name, suddenly advanced to the chief seat among the princes, in Ahasuerus' court, was used as an instrument, of the foul serpent, to attempt a thorough extermination from the face of the earth, of the people of God. Haman's high, ambitious temper, was evidently excited by the

want of respect shewn to his newly exalted honor, by Mordecai the Jew, who neither rose from his seat at the king's gate in honor of his greatness, nor bowed his head when Haman passed. The king's servants observing this neglect toward their sovereign's new favorite, expostulated with Mordecai, but in vain; their daily impetuosity answered not the purpose they wished; the Jew was inflexible; and Haman soon meditated a revenge, whose foundation was laid in slander; and its final issue witnessed his own ruin:—

“And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, there is a certain people scattered abroad, and dispersed among the people in all the provinces in thy kingdom, and their laws are diverse from all people, neither keep they the king's laws, therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them. If it please the king let it be written that they may be destroyed, &c.” offering also ten thousand talents of silver from his own coffers, for the royal treasury; artful, unhappy man! This contemplated mischief shall reverberate upon thee, and thy violent dealing bruise thy malicious pate.

The king consented ; the cruel edict was issued from Shushan, in the name of Ahasuerus, and sealed with the royal ring :—

“ And the letters were sent express into all the king’s provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil for a prey.”

After this was in circulation, wicked Haman sat down to drink with the king ; but the city Shushan was perplexed, “ Mordecai rent his clothes, put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, crying with a loud and bitter cry.” A very great mourning prevailed among the Jews, fasting, weeping and wailing, and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

Queen Esther, hearing of her kinsman’s situation, sent a messenger to enquire the cause. Mordecai returned for a reply, a copy of the cruel edict, with a charge that she (Esther) should use her influence with the king, in supplicating redemption for her people.

At first the queen relucted from this adventurous act, which exposed her life to immediate danger ; and for a moment the orphan fair, forgot her descent from ancient Jacob, whose habitation was about to be desolated by the heathen who knew not God, and called not upon his great name. She dispatched Hatach (a chamberlain of the king) to go again to Mordecai, and remind him of the law in force in the king's court, that would put to death, any man or woman, who should presume to appear uncalled, in the king's presence, except by special favor of his majesty, the golden sceptre be extended.

Mordecai would not accept of this plea of the queen ; and returned for answer, that she must not please herself with a hope of exemption from the ruin which awaited the Jews, whose blood flowed in her tender veins ; nor expect the palace of Shushan to shelter her from death. He beside intimated that deliverance should arise to the people of God from another source, if she held her peace, in which the house of Abihail would not be interested ; and queried with Esther, whether she was not elevated to royal favor, for the purpose of advocating the cause of God's people at this awful juncture.

Esther is roused to exertion, and resolved to face the danger apparent before her. She cannot resist the eloquent pleading of her beloved cousin, on behalf of hapless Israel. If she is raised to a kingdom, in order to redeem a nation from death, let it be accomplished even at the expence of her own life; she cannot die in a better cause. Now she feels a union with the afflicted seed of Abraham: she sends word to Mordecai, to assemble the Jews that are at Shushan, and commence a solemn fast on her account, she and her maiden's will fast also, three days and three nights this fast is to continue; and then said the beauteous, weeping descendant of Abihail, "I will go into the king's presence, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish."

At the appointed time, queen Esther put on her royal apparel and appeared before the royal throne. Fancy paints her lovely form advancing slowly towards his imperial majesty, at whose feet the Persian and Median princes and nobles, deigned to bow. Ahasuerus views the approach of his blooming queen; on her head he sees the brilliant crown, first placed thereon by his own hand; around its glittering gems are playing her

golden locks ; and from her sparkling eyes are emitted beams that reach his princely heart. She obtains favor in his sight ; and the golden sceptre is extended for her touch ; it is like life from the dead, auspicious to her throbbing bosom of Israel's redemption day. " Then said the king, what wilt thou queen Esther ? And what is thy request ? It shall be given to thee, even to half of my kingdom." How sweet these accents to the ear of one, who lately trembled under apprehensions, that this anticipated scene was a prelude to her destruction ! Happy Esther, highly favoured among women, the Lord is with thee, and the God of hosts is thy reward !

Esther fell at the king's feet, and with tears besought him to spare the lives of her people ; she exposes the malice of wicked Haman, and his device against the afflicted Jews : she supplicates for a speedy reversal of the condemnatory letters written by the Agagite, that are in hasty circulation in the land : listen to her pathetic pleas, her arguments with the king, " how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people ? Or how can I bear to witness the destruction of my

kindred! "Then the king said to Esther the queen, and to Mordecai the Jew, behold I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him have they hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews." Poor ill fated man, he digged a pit for the innocent Mordecai, into which he is fallen himself! The king adds, "write also for the Jews, as you please, in the king's name; and seal it with the king's ring; for letters bearing such marks may no man reverse. The royal scribes were again called, to write a grant to the Jews, to stand in their own defence, throughout Ahasuerus' realm; the mules, camels and young dromedaries, bore the messengers of deliverance to the weeping scattered people of God; and in every province, and every city, whithersoever the king's commandment came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast, and a good day. And now a reformation commenced among the heathen too; for it is written that many of the people of the land became Jews. for the fear of the Jews (or God of the Jews) fell upon them. What a mighty revolution has taken place; and the personal instrument a delicate female! In view of Mordecai and Esther on one hand, and the Agagite, his fate, and the doom of

his sons, on the other, we will take up the closing verse of Deborah's inspired anthem, and then bid our fair heroine, the eastern queen, farewell:—"So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord; but let them that love thee, be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might." Amen.

LETTER VII.

I RESUME my pen, dear sister, to pursue my subject, with prayer unto Sarah's and Rebecca's God, Magdalene's forgiving Saviour, and Paul's great General, the glorious King of Zion, that he will continue his assistance, to my feeble powers, in attempting a collection of the scattered golden grains, in Scripture, which relate to his favor towards the weaker part of his heritage. In the preceding pages I have endeavoured to exhibit the privileges, liberty and honors granted to women under the law, an account of the apostles quotation, 1 Cor. 34, with some account of the labours and success of ancient godly daughters of the great Lord Almighty. I have proved that a dispensation of the word of God, was committed to Huldah, a special commission to Deborah, the title of prophetess to them and Mirriam before them; that Hannah offered vocal prayer and praise to God, in the Meeting-house at Shiloh, undisturbed by the aged prophet Eli, after he discovered her engagement in devotion to his God. I have taken the liberty to mention other female characters also, whose names are on sacred record among the worthies, who were polished

stones in God's house, viz. Sarah, and her daughter-in-law Rebecca, of whom Moses wrote, as objects of divine notice in the covenant established with Abraham and his seed, in which all the families of the earth were interested. I have introduced Ruth, a native of Moab, widow of Chilion, who was by birthright a Jew, as an amiable and devoted convert to the true God, and typical of the calling of the gentiles, in the gospel dispensation. Esther, a fair orphan, descendant from Benjamin, the twelfth patriarchal character, whom good old Jacob blessed, I have brought to view, as a female Saviour of God's people, from temporal ruin. Any candid reader of her history, will own her an object of peculiar favour; in the morning of life, she "devoured the prey, and at evening divided the spoil." While I indulge myself in setting these eminent female characters on the hill of observation, for beholders to respect and admire, I do not forget the frailty of woman. Eve's compliance with the proposal of fallen lucifer, is still painfully remembered; the name of the artful inhabitant of Sorek's valley, and her two successful artifice, is odious and despicable, and concerning such characters, Solomon truly asserted, "their hearts are snares and nets,

and their hands are bands, their house inclineth unto death, and their paths unto the dead." Michael, the daughter of Saul, in opposing and mocking at king David was guilty of violating the law of subjection, and confers no honour upon her sex, or royal lineage, by such behaviour. It is too lamentable a truth, that female usurpation has not ceased to disquiet the earth; but even in this enlightened and polish'd age, women sometimes forget their obligation to humility, and are so vain as to dream they are wiser than their husbands; and are guilty of contradicting and opposing them. The name of Jezebel, which signifies, woe to the dunghill, is held in just abhorrence, by every lover of virtue and modesty. She was daughter of a heathen prince, and espoused to Ahab, who reigned over Israel, twenty-two years, to the sorrow and desolation of God's dear church; truly when the wicked bear rule, the people have cause to mourn. Ahab reared up an altar for his wicked consort's favorite idol god, planted a grove for idolatrous purposes, yea, did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger, than all the kings of Israel which were before him; and his abounding wickedness is imputed by the

inspired writer, to the baleful influence of his base companion. To Jezebel, is attributed the sacrifice of the prophets lives, who held the testimony of the true God. She also threatened the great and eminent Elijah, with similar fate, which God prevented. I would rehearse more of her evil deeds; but am too sick of her, to continue the theme. I am glad to see her tumbling down over the wall of Jezreel. Jehu is welcome to the office of executioner—so I leave them.

Athaliah is another unamiable female character, whose name is left on scripture record. She usurped the throne in Jerusalem, after her son was killed by Jehu's command, and destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah, Joash alone excepted, who was hid away successfully with his nurse, by Jehosabab an older child of the late king over that illustrious house, from which the royal sceptre is not to depart, until Shiloh come, to whose dominion all nations shall finally be subject, whose reign is everlasting. The counsel of God shall stand, nor can wicked men or usurping women overthrow his purpose, Glory to his great eternal name! I do not write this for your entertainment, my dear Julia; and must ask you to excuse so painful a digression, on account of these let-

ters becoming public property, or a "common prey." I have noticed the last four females as objects of disgust and witnesses to woman's frailty—usurping offenders, justly reprobated, and righteously punished. And now, even justice to my subject, requires that I should not pass over in silence, the judgments upon Israel, prophesied by Isaiah, in which females are represented as oppressors of bleeding Zion. It is my opinion my dear sister, that women can do great service for God by adhering to his counsels and walking in his truth; also wasting and destruction are suffered through them, who disobey his commands and break his statutes. Isaiah cried in the ears of Israel's sinful nation, see Chap. iii. 15, 26.

"What mean ye, that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord of hosts?"

"Moreover the Lord saith, because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet, therefore the Lord will smite the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion."

In six verses following, the ornaments and gay apparel, fashionable in that day among

the wicked hypocritical females in Israel; are recounted by Isaiah. The next contains their disgraceful sentence; and the conclusion is "because, &c." see verse 16. That Zion's men shall fall by the sword; and her mighty men in the war. Her gates shall mourn and lament; and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground.

In many female professors at the present day I see representatives of those ancient scourges of God's church. I have long been among them as a speckled bird. The seven women still hold the rein, "we will wear our own apparel." It is difficult in many assemblies for worship called christian, to designate even professors, by their dress and manners; even the sacred camp of "free brethren," is polluted by "outward female adorning," prohibited and disapproved by Paul and Peter. Here I must notice, according to impartial observation, that when a female rises in public testimony, if her person is arrayed in Babylonish vesture, her accents are a confused mixture of Canaan and Ashdod; if this remark offends my sisters by profession, I cannot help it, my message to them is strip yourselves of pride, put on the seamless garment of divine humility, let your adorning be, not the outward adorning of

plating the hair, wearing of gold, or putting on gay apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not conceivable, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God, of great price; for after this manner, holy women of old, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, &c. When the filth of the daughter of Zion shall be washed away, according to divine testimony, there is a great glory to descend upon the church; even in such a mortifying light as Isaiah holds up to view in the female house of Israel. I read the equality of the sexes in God's account book, and tremble for myself and my contemporaries in the profession of the christian faith.

Ezekiel, a Jewish exiled priest of God, had the word of the Lord to deliver to captive Israel, in the land of the Chaldeans, five years after the confinement of Jehoaikim, and was most wonderfully enlightened and favored in miraculous visions of God, and his glory. He was entrusted with a mission to the rebellious house of Israel, different indeed in some respects, from any other prophet or priest; but not inferior in solemnity and importance. He was contempora-

ry with favored Daniel ; and it is likely they sat together on the banks of the Chebar, engaged in mournful conference concerning the state of the children of their people. In the thirteenth chapter of the book of Ezekiel, the inspired son of Buzi, addresses solemn reproof to false prophets, by commandment of God. "Thus saith the Lord God, woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing ! O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the desert, they decoyed the unwary Israelites, with false tidings of peace, when there was no peace ; one raised a wall, and others daubed with untempered mortar ;" but the whole work was condemned by God to utter ruin ; the overflowing shower of his righteous judgments, the loud storm of Jehovah's fierce anger, and hailstones of Almighty wrath, rent the slender wall of tradition and hypocrisy, and swept it all away, with the besom of destruction in the hand of a righteous God ! In the seventeenth verse of this chapter, Ezekiel is directed to address the daughters of his people who prophesy out of their own heart, (the 2d verse has addressed the sons who commit this trespass.) It appears my dear sister, that in ancient times, the office of prophecy was common to either sex, in Israel.

False prophetesses existed, and did evil, as well as false prophets. They were spiritual idolaters, and obnoxious to God's righteous judgments. Finally, for I fear my subject is become tedious, the whole church of God, including every officer, and all its offices, is in Scripture designated in the feminine gender. The weeping priest and prophet in Anathoth ever spake of the church in a female form. Jerusalem, the seat of ancient worship, Judah the throne of dominion, are lamented thus by Jeremiah: "How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people! How is she become as a widow! She that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces; how is she become tributary! She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks; among all her lovers there is none to comfort her; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they have become her enemies. Judah is gone into captivity, she dwelleth among the heathen; she findeth no rest, all her persecutors overtook her between the straits. The ways of Zion mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts; all her gates are desolate; her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness. The adversary hath spread out his hand upon all her

pleasant things ; for she hath seen that the heathen entered into her sanctuary, concerning whom God had commanded that they should not enter into his congregation. But sufficient.

One thing in addition I shall notice, and then take my leave of the law dispensation. The thirty-first chapter of the book of Proverbs, is entitled "Lemuel's lesson of chastity;" he is called a king; and it appears wrote as his mother taught him. I must be indulged with liberty to believe she was a prophetess; but confess I am ignorant of her name and residence. The chapter however is a beautiful poem, and its theme a lively illustration of the mind, behaviour and exaltation of a godly woman. "She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness, her own works shall praise her in the gates;" the gates of the Zion of God, which are far dearer to the most high, than all the dwellings of Jacob.

I am now willing to quit these sacred shores, even the dispensation called the law; and launch my little bark into the gospel ocean claiming for its ballast, in the spirit's pure tes-

timony Joel's prophetic declaration, second chapter, 28th and 29 verses, which evidently relate to the Christian church, "And it shall come to pass, in the last days, SAITH GOD, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons, and your daughters shall prophecy; also upon my servants and on my hand-maidens, I will pour out of my spirit, and they shall prophesy."

Note—"daughters;" and the annexed "shall," again "hand-maidens," and "shall," again. Does God speak in irony? No. Does he command in earnest? Yea verily. Upon what ground then are ministers and brethren, who say women must keep silence in meetings for his worship? Let Jehovah be the Judge! I condemn no man.

My feeble frame requires repose at this time; I can safely rest in this little bark of faith, as it rides at anchor in the stream of Gospel favor. So adieu for the present.

LETTER VIII.

AS I seat myself at the writing table, this morning, the carol of the feathered tribe, who inhabit the trees upon this retired spot, salutes my ear; and this with the sound of the waters as they strike the rocky shore, is all the interruption I am liable to, apart from myself. I am naturally fond of writing, delighted in the exercise in my childhood; and at the middle age of life, I find it pleasant; but my present undertaking is very different from any preceeding; and the idea that these Epistles are designed for the perusal of any one, friend or foe, who please to review them, I am constrained to cry; Ah Lord God how can I write; for I am in spiritual understanding but a babe! Yet, my dear sister, there is a soft, still voice, that whispers encouragement to my heart; and the word that came to Jeremiah, is before me, "thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel, write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee, in a book." I am with thee, saith the Lord thy God! I shall therefore strive to persevere. Toward the close of the seventh letter, I observed I was about to venture my little bark in the gospel ocean. But this

morning I can see by faith the gospel ship at anchor within the promises; and Jesus her glorious commander is reaching his hand, to invite me to quit my slender vessel, and come on board with him. Now I am anxious to understand something respecting the sacred freight; and in the first place, a treasure, called the gospel according to St. Luke, is presented me for the benefit of my present subject.

Amid the variety in opinion and sentiments entertained by the different sects called Christian, and the useless and cruel divisions, and dissensions, disseminated by the old serpent, there is one point to which all professed christians are obliged to adhere, even that Jesus Christ is the only name given under Heaven, whereby any can be saved. I do firmly believe it, for a single soul; and the record left concerning his life by the four evangelists, I would have engraven upon the table of my heart as with the point of a diamond. Let us, now my dear sister, look over the history of our blessed Saviour, and by it try to fathom the depth of my subject. And I shall use the same liberty now, as I did when tracing it over Old Testament ground.

I cannot be confined merely to instances of female prophecy; but I want to take a view of our sex, and their relation to Christ; and our rights and liberties in his dear church. St. Luke gives a more particular account of the advent of the Messiah into this sinful world, than the other Evangelists; and the first chapter introduced two eminently favored female characters interested in that scene, which involves the eternal interests of the universe. Elizabeth, wife of Zacharias, is represented as a righteous matron in God's house; she becomes a mother of the greatest prophet that was ever born of woman.— Mary, the espoused wife of Joseph, is a blooming virgin, and to her is given the highest title ever yet conferred upon any mortal, she is the mother of Jesus, which is called Christ. The youthful and lovely Nazarene, expresses herself with the majesty and boldness of riper years, in the inspired anthem of praise, she sung in Elizabeth's habitation, after conferring with that godly woman upon the subject of the birth of Emmanuel.

“And Mary said, my soul doth magnify the Lord; and my spirit doth rejoice in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low

estate of his handmaiden ; for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." What language, my sister, issuing from the lips of a poor, illiterate female at the age of fourteen years ! Mary was rich in faith, and heir to a glorious inheritance, that can never fade away—her memory is embalmed among the just ; and from generation to generation, the saints continually hail her, the blessed among women !

The divine Saviour, while he sojourned in this vale of tears, ever manifested the tenderest care over the female part of his heritage. The miracle of healing was performed upon their bodies, to them he preached the gospel, and converted their souls, and forgave their sins. In all his communications to his disciples, or public preaching, I do not recollect a single intimation of an inequality between the sexes in his church, nor can I find him ever reproofing a female for too great forwardness and zeal in his cause. He permitted women to accompany him in his travels from city to city, and village to village, as he went preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Susanna, accompanied the lowly

Jesus, and ministered unto him of their substance. Happy days! and happy women! Blessed were their eyes, for they saw him whom my soul loveth! blessed were their ears, for they heard his charming voice, and blessed were their lips, for they were permitted to shout his praise! It is my lot to live in a day, when women's travelling from place to place with the testimony of the Lamb of God, is to the apprehension of a majority of professors of christianity, synonymous with infamy—it is even so—but it is duty to be patient in tribulation; and willing to be abased. Some persons have asserted that in the New Testament, there is no instance given, of a female's speaking in a worshipping assembly, when males were present. They are certainly under a mistake. The evangelist Luke, records two; one took place when the blessed Jesus was preaching, and the other at his circumcision. The first is to my view a free meeting. Jesus prayed, one of his disciples spoke, then the Saviour gave them a rule for prayer; and illustrated the same by comparison. He cast out a dumb spirit—the Jews accused him of doing this miracle through the prince of devils.—The Son of God then exalted his warning

voice, and preached to the hardened Jews; when a certain woman of the company, apparently overflowing with a sense of his power and glory, exclaimed "blessed is the womb that bare thee; and the paps which thou hast sucked." Jesus replied thus, "yea; rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." Some persons from a transient view of the matter, may infer from the expression "rather," and the remainder of the sentence, that Jesus intended a one side reproof to the female speaker. I view it otherwise; it looks to me like a ready assent, and followed by an important caution. The other instance of a female's speaking in public, is still more striking; and it is dignified and solemn. At the time when the holy child Jesus was presented in the temple at Jerusalem for the administration of the rite of circumcision, a venerable widow of the age of four score years, appeared in the house of the Lord, in the character of a prophetess, and bore a public testimony for the infant Messiah. It is recorded by St. Luke that this Anna, Phanael's widow, spake of Christ in the temple, to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. Ancient Anna was allowed to praise God, and exalt his

name in that magnificent temple ; but at this day ordinary houses, are so terrible by reason of the presence of mortal men, that our lips, my sister, must never be opened before them. One female says to another "hold thy tongue," for we may not make mention of the name of the Lord before men. Some persons who are convinced that females have certain spiritual duties to perform, that lie beyond their own chimney corner and home nursery, are at a loss still to know when and how much liberty may be safely given them. I dont say scripturally safely, as it respects male dignity ! some say flee away into conference meetings and prophesy there ; but prophesy not at Bethel, for it is the king's chapel, it is the king's court.

Many persons who advocate the female cause, in public speaking, quote to the woman of Samaria, as an instance of the same. I have likewise heard it objected against ; and her act called "a common errand." Common or proper, public or private, preaching or prating, if I understand language, this woman first announced the appearance of the Saviour of Jew and Gentile, to the male citizens of Sychar a city of Samaria, and she per-

suaded them to come to Jesus, and hear his heavenly doctrine. They came, and many of them believed on him, while listening to the woman's relation, and many more believed, when they heard him for themselves. A woman was the first Samaritan convert to the christian faith, and by a woman the proclamation was given first in the city Sychar, that Messiah was come; she was instrumental in a reformation, and it is written that "whose winneth souls is wise," which is enough. Now my dear sister, what kind of entertainment may we conclude, a female would receive in this polite age, who should call upon sinful men in a public street of one of our towns or cities, to repent of their evil deeds, and forsake them to follow him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, doubtless she would be considered a subject for the insane hospital; and perhaps threatened with the task in bridewell.

I have heard the remark, that the New Testament is silent respecting female commissions to preach the Gospel. When Christ sent forth the twelve, we understand who they were by Matthew and Mark's account.

We know that women were not ordained then upon that mountain, where the anointing, preaching and healing dispensation was first committed to mortals by the Son of God ; neither have we authority to say that women were sent forth among the seventy, nor can we positively declare they were not.— In advancing aught however in favour of the first position, I think I could not possibly reach beyond a hypothesis, and finally I have no desire to view the subject in that light. That Jesus never gave a commission to a female at all, however I deny. If the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, as the justifier of them who should believe on his name, constitutes a glorious branch of the Cedar that is to be planted in every land, according to God's ancient promise, "In the mountain of the heights of Israel, under whose ever verdant boughs dwell all fowl of every wing," then a very honourable commission was received by faithful Mary, from the lips of our risen Lord, on the morning, when he triumphantly arose from Joseph's tomb. To Mary Magdalene, Zion's conquering king first appeared ; and calling her by name, Mary, said, "go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto

my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." It was a solemn message, and is quick and powerful to my poor heart. Mary went, she preached a risen Jesus. "I have seen the Lord" my brethren, dry your tears, our Saviour is alive, and hath sent me to announce to you his ascension back to heaven. . My dear sister, when I read the 21st chapter of St. John's Gospel, I am not at a loss concerning the calling of females to speak in the praise of him who died to redeem their souls, and extol the stem of Jesse's rod, even in the great congregation. I believe also, that some female disciples are called and qualified by their living head, to visit churches, with messages from God, and to warn the wicked to flee from the wrath to come. This my dear sister, is my present opinion, my serious belief. I know it is unpopular, that it has comparatively few friends in the visible churches. I am acquainted with four denominations of christians only, who are willing to allow any credence to female testimonies in religious meetings, which I will now mention; and in these is a diversity of views and opinions. I declare my dear sister, my poor heart is often torn with anguish, when I look at the breach,

es in Zion, the seamless garment of Christ, rent by his professed ambassadors, friends and followers, and his body newly crucified by those who cry hosannah! I never expect the churches universally to agree respecting female gifts and labour in God's vineyard, until the watchmen see eye to eye, and all are of one heart and soul, in his worship and service.

But to return; The society of Friends, are full in their belief, that the gospel dispensation exhibits the two sexes upon a level; and that preaching, and the work of the ministry, are equally divided; and they act consistent with this belief. Their women who travel to carry gospel tidings, receive the same credentials as the males, are approbated by the elders in monthly and quarterly meetings, receive a certificate of approbation and fellowship; are received as ministers of the New Testament by all their sister branches, where they journey. Godly, devoted women, have sailed from Albion's shores, to visit America with the glad tidings of God's good will to earth, salvation to men; and similar characters have left this happy land, on the same employ, to preach Jesus, on the oppo-

site side of the vast Atlantic. The memory of these highly favored females, who have ceased to blow the gospel trumpet, and sleep in Jesus, is held in sweet and sacred remembrance, by the society whose visible fellowship, and christian patronage they enjoyed, while fulfilling the dispensation committed to their trust.

A few years since, I believe, engaged female members of the Methodist society, frequently improved their gifts in public worshipping assemblies. They are at present, I believe, allowed this liberty, in seasons of reformation ; and I am told, at their conferences and love feasts, females freely speak or pray. I have seen some very lovely female disciples, belonging to this denomination whose gifts and graces, were apparently more Christlike, than many ordained pastors and bishops.

The Society of Free-will Baptists, as far as I have been privileged with their acquaintance, are free from prejudice on the subject ; they appear desirous to cherish spiritual gifts and graces among their female members, and are conscientiously tender in all

their movements toward them, as far as I have personal knowledge or information by report. In New Hampshire they are remarkable candid respecting female preaching.

The Society called Christian (to the exclusion of all other names) the latest sect, I believe embodied in church form, in the U. S. A. permit their female members to occupy upon their talents in public exhortation and prayer. And no devoted female follower of Jesus, that I know of, has yet been deprived of this liberty in the connection called Christian.

A few years since had any pen occupied upon my subject, the denomination called Baptist, would not escape this list—but now they are in a situation to avoid the disgrace. Sometimes a venerable preacher or two, will condescend to notice the subject, by preaching a whole sermon against it, after a female stroller has been holding forth in his atmosphere. One minister very seriously observed, that had he a female relation, who travelled and spoke in public, he should request her either to drop these proceedings, or remove to a part of the coun-

try very distant from him. On my part, I can say, he is welcome to go himself; and if he please may re-cross the Atlantic, and breathe his last sigh upon his native shores, it would not cost me a tear of sorrow.

The four societies I have mentioned, my dear sister, which favor in a greater or less degree, the subject I am discussing, I assure you have special regard to the moral conduct of their labourers and ministers. No deviation from the rules of decency and ethical correctness, is countenanced among them. As far as I am acquainted with their regulations and movements, I view them patrons of strict morality.

Farewell.

LETTER IX.

I am now come as far as to Bethany, where the event foretold in the message delivered by Mary takes place. The everlasting gates of heaven, are lifted up to receive the King of Glory, the Lord of hosts, the divine mediator, the church's advocate, the believing penitent's kind Intercessor, friend and Saviour. Holy angels lend their celestial pinions, and move towards this terrestrial ball, clapping their glad wings in rapturous exultation at the return of the Son of God, to his throne in glory. Jesus our Lord is hid from the gazing disciples, the skies cement again—he is hid from their mortal eyes.—We will now attend to the movements of his primitive followers after the ascension of Christ to his Father.

They returned immediately from Mount Olivet to Jerusalem, a short journey of about seven miles. There they retired to an upper room, to wait for the descent of the Holy Ghost, as their blessed master directed them to do. Peter and James, John and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alpheus, Simon Ze-

lotes, and Judas the brother of James.—
 These saith St. Luke, all continued with one
 accord in prayer and supplication, with the
 women, and Mary the mother of Jesus and
 with his brethren. The women were not de-
 barred the privilege of this church meeting.
 And, when the day of Penticost was fully
 come, they were ALL with one accord in one
 place. And now the miraculous descent of
 the Holy Ghost was witnessed; and they
 were *all* filled with his influence, and began
 to speak with other tongues as the spirit gave
 them utterance. It appears this was a pub-
 lic meeting; and opposers of the Nazarene's
 company mocked at the solemn scene: and
 charged the disciples with drunkenness.—
 Peter then rose to defend the gospel, and
 preached a powerful sermon, by which three
 thousand souls were converted at once. His
 text was the prophecy of Joel, relating to
 this out-pouring of the holy spirit, and con-
 taining God's declaration concerning female
 prophecy. If you meditate my sister, on
 Peter's manner of introducing the passage.
 I think you will agree with me in the opinion
 that women spake in that great meeting, as
 the spirit gave them utterance. The spirit
 of prophesy, we find among the gifts of God,

on board the gospel ship; and females are interested therein, and continued to proclaim a risen Christ. The word "prophesying," has been objected to by some persons with whom I have conversed upon this subject. Prophesying, say they, is foretelling future events. Gospel prophesying, is not defined thus by Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ.—He says it is speaking unto men, to exhortation, edification, and comfort.* John the writer of Revelations, remarked that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. Now the writer of the Acts of the Apostles, mention four prophetesses in Philip's family, who also preached the kingdom of God. To this good man's house, Paul and his company came; and no command from the great Apostle can we find that these four virgins shall resign their testimony, nor let it ring again.

The strength of opposers to female preaching lies in a charge Paul gives respecting the women at Corinth, and his directions to Timothy. I will now give you my mind on this head. 1st. I will observe, the apostle is

*1 Cor. 14, 3. Rev. 17, 10.

writing to a particular church. 2d. He says to that church, "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home, for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." How can any rational, candid, meditative christian, direct this language of the Apostle, to female disciples at large, in meetings for the worship of God? Has he not in a preceding chapter, given directions concerning women's praying and prophesying? Would this holy man undertake a revocation of the almighty will? God declares his hand-maidens shall prophecy in the last days? Can we charge Paul with contradicting God? I dare not indulge the idea. I will try a dissection of the text. 1st. Let your women (not let all women every where) keep silence in the churches. Whose women? The Corinthians—keep silence. Where? In the churches. In church meetings for business certainly. You will recollect in my second letter, I mentioned briefly, the situation of the church at Corinth, at the time the apostle wrote to them. I will now remark farther,

that female members of that Church had conducted in a very unbecoming manner in their church meetings, opposing and contradicting the brethren; usurping authority over them, which the apostle forbids next, for it is not permitted unto them to speak, that is, in meetings of the church for business; they are to be in subjection to the men, as also saith the law. With regard to the first, I view myself to be subject to my brethren, who are standing in the counsel of God, when I obey the spirit of the Lord, in speaking in meetings for his worship, when he bids me; and if I keep silence in disobedience, I should view myself a violater of the law of subjection, &c. With regard to the other, "as the law saith," I believe on that ground female prophesying may rest; for Deborah, Miriam, and Huldah anciently took possession, by the will of God. Again, "and if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home:" surely it is manifest this related to particular women in that church, and offending, insolent ones too. The apostle does not address me, for I never had a husband; and if I had, and the man was not a christian, I should by no means expect any spiritual instruction from him. These words

of the apostle's, are to me a very strong proof, that his prohibition reached only to church meetings for business. Again, "for it is a shame for women to speak in the church;" it is a shame and sin, O Corinthian women, for you to interfere in the discipline of the church; and by commandment of the Lord, I write this, to forbid your repeating the offence. By some worldly, and bigotted professors, I may be charged with interpolation; but my own heart condemns me not in this thing, therefore I have confidence toward God, who knoweth all things, forever adored and magnified be his great name. Amen.

In his epistle to Rome, and Philippi, Paul very kindly and respectfully notices his female friends and helpers in Christ Jesus, while the women at Corinth receive only correction, which they deserved. Please to attend to his visit at Philippi. The inspired penman states, that Paul received a commission to carry the glad tidings of gospel grace, into Macedonia, in a vision. Therefore he left Troas, came with a strait course to Samothracia; and the next day to Neapolis, from thence to Philippi, a populous city of Macedonia, in the Grecian Republic, and

tarried certain days. Timotheus accom-
 panied the apostle thither; and on the Sab-
 bath, they repaired to the river side, where
 prayer was wont to be made, and "spake to
 the women which resorted thither," from
 the expression "prayer was wont to be
 made," with a recollection of the apostle's
 call to this place, "come over and help us,"
 see Acts xvi. 13 & 9. I conclude there were
 a few pious persons there, who had previ-
 ous to the apostle's visit, heard of Jesus and
 the resurrection, and it appears to me they
 were women only. Calmett, who wrote a
 dictionary of the bible so called, a folio work
 in three volumes, containing two thousand and
 four hundred pages, states, that in the infancy
 of the church of Christ at Philippi, it was disci-
 plined and governed by two women, Euodias
 and Syntyche, whom Paul in the epistle addres-
 sed to that branch of the Gospel vine, besought
 to be of the same mind in the Lord. Cal-
 mett observes there was a split between
 them on doctrinal points; and this drew the
 watch word from faithful Paul's pen. There
 is also in the same letter, an entreaty to a
 brother at Philippi, whom he calls "true
 yoke fellows," to help those women which
 labored with him in the Gospel, whose names

were in the book of life. Objectors against me will say, this labor was making clothes and the like. Ah! does Paul say they laboured for me? No, they laboured with me *in the Gospel*. Will salary ministers who wear the surplice and read notes, tell me that their wives are engaged in the work of the ministry? Labouring in the Gospel, must be allowed sounding the trumpet, or I think language suffers violence; and the violent taketh away its true meaning by unhallowed force. I wish every objector to female labourers in the vineyard of the Lord, would make diligent search for the true motive, the ground of their dislike, and see what foundation it stands on, and whether it is *their order* they are tenacious about, or God's order, whether a selfish principle lurks at the bottom, or a godly jealousy for the honor of Christ's Church in its purity!!! This I ardently desire!!! A female's travelling abroad on Gospel errands, was suffered by Paul, as well as his great Master; and in the sixteenth chapter of his epistle to the church at Rome, this chief among the ambassadors for Christ, most affectionately commends to the fellowship of his brethren, Phebe a servant of the church at Cenchrea, the port of

Corinth, directing them to receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and assist her in whatsoever business she had need; for said Paul "she hath been a succourer of many and myself also." As to the particu- lar object of Phebe's visit to Rome, we can ascertain no more than it was of a godly sort; and received the apostle's commendation.— She carried Paul's letter, and some persons suppose this was the object of her journey; but the writer of the epistle gives no such intimation. Calmett mentions Phebe as a deaconess in the Cenchrean church and eminent for godliness.

In the second verse of the sixteenth chapter, the apostle greets Aquila and Priscilla, as his helpers in Christ Jesus. I believe he mentions the woman first, however, in this pious couple, we have an instance of a man and woman drawing together in an even yoke—they were both endued with divine knowledge of the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ; and were zealous for his honour and glory. It appears they were instrumental in greatly advancing the usefulness of eloquent Apollos of Alexandria, who gratefully attended to their united testimony

of Jesus and the resurrection. He became a very successful preacher of the Gospel at Achaia, assisting the minds of them "which had believed through Jesus;" and mightily convincing the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ. Paul in writing about Priscilla and Aquila says "who have for my life laid down their own necks; unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles."—The apostle in this chapter notices several female labourers beside, such as Persis, who labored much in the Lord, Tryphene and Tryphosa, Mary, Urbane, &c. So far am I removed from doubts respecting women's duties, on the score of Paul's address to the Corinthians, that I view him a strong advocate for female liberty in the church of Christ; and doubtless he is a ministering angel to the weeping Marys and godly Phebes in the present day. I really wish that ministers now possessed the heaven-born zeal, the true discernment, and ardent love which so brilliantly shone in the character of Paul, with his disinterested, laborious, indefatigable disposition to exertion in spreading Emmanuel's fame, how ardent, how faithful was the converted pupil of Gamaliel! Is not the

finger of God pointing ministers to his history,
 “read and go and do likewise?”

I shall briefly notice, the 11th, 12th, 13th
 and 14th verses of Paul’s 2d chapter to Tim-
 othy, 1st Epistle.

“Let the woman learn in silence with all
 subjection. But I suffer not a woman to
 teach, nor to usurp authority over the man,
 but to be in silence. For Adam was first
 formed, then Eve. And Adam was not de-
 ceived, but the woman being deceived was
 in the transgression.”

I am going my dear Julia, to give you a
 statement of my views of these passages.—
 And while I take so much liberty as to think,
 believe and act for myself, I am perfectly
 willing my dear fellow mortals should be
 equally free.

It is my opinion, this direction to Timothy,
 is connected particularly with the address
 to them at Corinth, who professed Christ; at
 least, I do think it probable. If an objector
 should puff at this as an absurd hypothesis,
 founded in air, I shall not be surprised; for
 if this hedge were removed completely away

from the female path, they must of course run clear of the imputation of disobedience to a dear apostle of the Lamb ; and their opposers grand desideratum lie in oblivion's shade. But to return. The 1st Epistle of Paul to Timothy, was addressed to the latter from Laodicea, while Timothy tarried at Ephesus. It is apparent to me that Timothy at this time was young, and comparatively very inexperienced. Now if you will please to turn to the last chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, you will find this young candidate for a Bishop's office is mentioned, and an intimation given of an intention to visit them ; verse 10. " Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear ; for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do. Let no man therefore despise him." Note—to Timothy, " let no man despise thy youth." 3d Chap. 12th verse. Observe the connexion. It strikes me that Paul, after hearing by a member of the house of Chloë, concerning the disorders at Corinth, dreaded young Timothy's contemplated visit ; and he wrote to beseech him to abide still at Ephesus. The apostle, however, laid no commands, either way. Timothy was left a free man. It appears to

me that Paul was rather confident than otherwise, that Timothy would visit Corinth; and dreaded the interview he must of course have with those spiritually haughty, usurping women; therefore he annexes a charge concerning the matter. I view it in this light. 12th and 13th verses—You would see a smile upon the countenance of your friend, my dear Julia, were you here, as she takes up Paul's argument, "*for Adam was first formed then Eve.*" Yes, sainted Apostle of the lowly Lamb of God, it was even so—Adam was created first; and when an Almighty hand was forming the woman, a divine voice proclaimed she was to be a help meet for man in God's work—forgive me sainted spirit, I mean no controversy. Again, verse 13. "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." O, my beloved brother Paul, you cannot surely mean to screen Adam entirely. Let us consult him, in the 5th chapter to the Romans. Here the apostle says, that "death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression—for if by one man's offence, death reigned by one," &c. and "by one man's disobedience many were

made sinners," &c. I shall now take my leave of the apostle. I believe I have collected the principal goods and chattels, that belong to the female houses of Israel, Jewish and Christian, ancient and modern, which are found in the ship, or church,

And I must be allowed a short recess.

Farewell,

LETTER X.

WE have viewed the female character in her native bower, blooming Eden the garden of delights—we have traced her wanderings, after her banishment from thence into the asylum of the church, when almighty wrath was poured upon the world that lay in wickedness ; and with rapture view the ark resting upon the top of mount Arrarat, seven months and seventeen days from the commencement of the deluge. We see her again in the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—find her by Egypt's river, with Moses in her arms, a weeping infant, snatched by her tender hand from a watery grave. We recognize her again among a great multitude on the banks of deliverance, and hear her loud timbrel sounding Israel's victory

“ Over Egypt's dark sea,
Jehovah hath triumph'd—his people are free.”

Again we have beheld her seated beneath a Palm tree in a grove which shaded her dwelling between Ramah and Bethel, whose luxuriant branches as they waved over her

head, were expressive of her upright and constant mind ; there she appears in the character of Israel's Judge and counsellor ; we have seen her at the head of an army by captain Barak's side, marching to Kedesh, and view her return home, with the palm of victory, and an inspired song ; we have noticed her in the lovely form of a ministering angel, to aged bereaved Naomi ; seen her a modest, diligent gleaner in the rich man's field, and afterward his happy consort ; in the great College at Jerusalem, seat of ancient science, we meet her again ; before her, priest Hilkiah, with four men, sent by Judah's monarch to ask counsel of God, and herself the oracle ; we have heard her message, and seen it verified ; she is a prophetess of the Lord, whose word rested in her heaven born soul ; in the house of God at Shiloh, we have seen her weeping and praying ; anon in the same temple of peace, she is rejoicing and praising the great Jehovah Jireh ; again we view her graceful form in Ahasuerus court, where she is known as a saviour of the banished seed. Thus far have we pursued the fair fugitive from Eden, the land of her nativity, along the path-way of the law, till we arrive at the banks of the gospel stream, and get on

board the christian ship, Emmanuel's church. Here the female character glows with the bloom of morning, in lovely Mary, mother to the king of kings, righteous Elizabeth, inspired Anna, devoted Phebe, and many more are occupants of those ranks, that in the first resurrection, will shine as the brightness of the firmament, terrible as an army with banners.

Having taken this view of female characters in both testaments, it might be suggested that I should be content. I feel, however, rather desirous of taking a peep, through the lattice, opened by John the Revelator, in fair Zion's wall, and search for women in the New Jerusalem, that city in the skies. And I behold her clothed with the sun of righteousness, this vain world beneath her feet, upon her head a crown of twelve stars, symbolical of the twelve patriarchs of God, or apostles of the Lamb; and more expressive of the twelve dispensations from Noah, to the end of the world. Now I am contented woman shall reign with Christ, and the ancient fathers, the holy prophets, and inspired apostles; by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of her testimony, shall every peniten-

tial Mary come off conqueror through Jesus,
her exalted prince and Saviour, to whom be
glory, forever and ever. Amen.

LETTER XI.

PERHAPS it may appear to my dear sister as she comes to the close of my tenth letter, that my subject is worn out; and I should do well to lay away my pen. This I would gladly do was my mind free; for writing is an arduous employment for my debilitated nerves to encounter; and I can say truly, the preceeding pages are traced through tribulation's deep, and much weariness to the flesh. My conscience bears me witness as to the sincerity of my intentions, in giving this little work to a prejudiced world. I have not felt insensible to my weakness and insufficiency, while I have held the unconscious pen; and I am not blind to some of the faults of this composition. Faults there are doubtless in my feeble attempts to speak or write on the subject of religion; in all things I come short of His glory, in whose sight even the heavens are not pure; and the angelic order before his burning throne are charged with comparative folly. Should the reader of this little work, discover errors in every sentence, I give them leave to put it to frail mortality's account, I will bear it my sister, and should a ray of truth be seen here

and there by lovers of that charity that never faileth, give God the glory, it is his due; and all glory belongs to his name. I have viewed the subject, I have attempted to defend, too solemn to be trifled with and treated with contempt; and while I have seen and felt, that it was "to the Jews a stumbling block and to Greeks foolishness," my heart has mourned and I have desired error might fall, and truth conquer; and knowing that whatever will weigh in the balance of the sanctuary, the scriptures of truth, must be in God's esteem a fit article for tabernacle use, and temple service, I have thought it expedient to bring the subject of female preaching to this only sure text, as I live in a day when a number of my sex are essaying to blow the silver trumpet, and publish salvation to a dying world. As to myself, I can say I am the least of all; and if I know my own heart, it is not my cause I have plead, but a cause dear to Emmanuel, and should be dear to all his lowly followers. I have felt impresions, and struggles in this oral warfare, that have shook my clay cottage to its centre, and threatened its dissolution. Perhaps, my sister, the severest part is gone by. I may not have much more to say in congregations on

mortality's shore ; nor much more to suffer on account of derision, cruel mockings and rebuke. I long to be better prepared for my departure. I do thirst for a Christ-like mind. I know the Lamb's company are a holy company. A white robe of sweet humility, a helmet of purifying hope, the mantle of fervent charity, girdle of unwavering truth, and shoes of gospel peace, are absolutely necessary and freely given to all who earnestly strive, carefully watch, and humbly pray. And I want, neither to sink into discouragements on one hand, as I view my unworthiness ; nor be flattered on the other, in thinking myself, something, if I am nothing. But I must quit self, for the present. I may by and by, say something more respecting my own exercises.

I observed there were at the present day, a number of females who attempt to sound salvation in Jesus name. Since my return to New Hampshire, I have heard it named, that never before in this country, was such a time known concerning female testimony ; and I believe it. If it is an evil, my sister, it is a growing one—it threatens to become a great tree. If as the calvinistic order of missionary characters profess to believe, the

dawn of a glorious day, called "millennium," has blest this lower world by its heavenly rays, I ask, is encreasing zeal among the daughters of Zion, to be reprobated and cast out? Many are to run to and fro, and knowledge is to encrease, not ignorance to bear sway in that blest era, long since foretold by ancient prophets, when Zion should arise and shine, when the light of Jerusalem should go forth as brightness and her salvation as a lamp that burneth!

Errors, palpable, and dangerous errors, generally owe their growth and increase, to dark shades, as in the night all the beasts of the forest do creep forth: truth springs up in the light, when the sun of righteousness bursts through the clouds, and shines most brightly.

If female testimony, be an evil, it is an increasing one, eight years ago, a "Baptist female preacher," was an object of wonder, astonishment, and curiosity, beyond account; never was there the like before! "A woman pray?" "and speak?" "What will come next?" "O! I'll go to the meeting; for what can a woman say;" the "nine days wonder ceases;" contempt, dislike, and prejudice remain; the cause is spreading. In the Freewill Baptist Society, and the

Christian Connection, are a number of these "novelties," now moving along the despised path; and they prophesy in the name of the Lord, their efforts are sometimes blest, with the confirmation, "signs following;" female trumpeters sound the alarm, "behold the avenger of blood," O sinner is on thy track, "escape for life," fly to the cross, "repent and be converted," and some hear, fear and take warning. They sound again, "backsliders, the blood of the covenant cries out over your wanderings, return to your only city of refuge, the gospel of Jesus, and prepare to meet your God!" some have relented, and returned weeping to their father's house, "I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son, make me as one of thy hired servants."

As in all churches, it is to be feared are hypocritical professors of christianity, who rightfully belong to the class, of which Judas Iscariot is leader, Annanias and Sapphira, his decendants, and Demas, Diotrophes, Alexander the coppersmith, and Simon the Sorcerer, their adherents, so among public teachers of religion I greatly fear, are false hearted men, who "teach for hire," and like Ahimaaz, they run without tidings,

having only seen a tumult. Insincerity, downright hypocrisy, zeal not according to knowledge, and many more poisonous weeds, are too apt to grow also in the ground of the female heart. Alas! alas! I cannot lawfully screen my sex, nor exclude myself from the charge of fallibility, and in-dwelling sin. Applause is as tempting to the weaker vessel, as it is to the other sex; censure is as much dreaded by them, and very likely more so, than by men in general. If therefore, female testimony was esteemed honorable, just, and commendable, by the majority of professed christians in this land of liberty, where no Christ opposing haughty Herod, Domitian, or Nero, are allowed to imprison banish, or put to death God's witnesses, if this were the case, my dear sister, your unworthy scribe would distrust herself, and doubt her exercises, more frequently; and more justly than she now does. I am aware, however, there is danger of deception by the strong holds, which sin has reared in the human heart, darkening the path way of duty, by the shades of self-sufficiency, self-dependence, self-righteousness, and spiritual pride, just as the damp night shades obscure the beaten track, to the sorrow of the way-worn watchful traveller, who mourns too late, his folly and delay; for I view these sins, my sister, to be the

wretched offspring of ignorance, of ourselves, and of God; and laziness, the prime minister in her dark domain. Indolence said the writer of an admired Essay on self-knowledge, is the constitutional sin of mankind. I have great cause to lament native and habitual indolence, by whose influence I have been kept in too great ignorance of myself. I hope I do sincerely mourn, sometimes, before the Lord, my stupidity and negligence; and I pray he will more thoroughly renovate my poor, wicked heart, and purely purge away my dross, and refine me that I may be a vessel fit for his sacred use!

I return from this digression. Although the temptations laid in woman's way at the present crisis are comparatively very few, to excite her to appear publicly in the character of a christian witness, yet I know there are some powerful incentives to a converted heart. Hope, rosy maid, presents a fragrant wreath of never withering flowers, to the female pilgrim, composed of the young convert's love, the mature believer's benediction, the plaudits of sweet angels, and approving smiles of Heaven's Great King. The excitement is almost overpowering to a host of objections that resist her entrance to the sacred work, although numerous and bri

the grasshoppers on the summer green. It appears to me, dear sister, that a hope of usefulness, and pleasing God, must be the most powerful allurements to a female breast, in this case, while the inward call to bear this cross, and a woe upon rejection and disobedience, most emphatically urge a resignation to an attempt; and plead for a courageous onward move to the field of battle. And O, what a war ensues! A christian poet, when painting the excellence and fruit of prayer observed that,

“Satan trembles when he sees,
The weakest saint upon its knees.”

And I believe he as often trembles, when the female who loves Jesus supremely, ranges the world, to sound his testimony in the ears of dying mortals; and in his alarm throws after her a great flood of sorrows, she hears the cry behind, “shattered, unsteady, crazy, deluded, fanactic, wild fire, &c.” and frequently finds that her reputation is prostrated to the lowest mark of infamy, in the song of the drunkard! Here is the fiery trial of her faith, here she receives the heaviest blows, that a frowning world can inflict.—The fatigues and exposures, privations and sufferings from a variety of inconveniences,

unavoidably connected with a travelling female's course, sometimes prompt the secret sigh, O that I were at rest in the silent grave, where the wicked cease from troubling, and weary pilgrims sweetly, softly sleep. While her opposers are often among the nobles, who are feasting at the costly board, walking upon the rich carpet, or chaunting to the sound of the viol upon the merry dancing floor; and others, of different character, as strongly prejudiced enjoy their domestic fire side, she wanders from place to place, always exposed more or less, to temptations, toils and snares, fightings without, and fears within, sometimes rebuffed by cold hearted professors, and betrayed by false brethren and sisters, who are of all men and women the worst. Is there no cross to bear, judge you, my sister, in this calling? Ah, I need not ask you! I recollect the tears you have shed over me, when you saw me on the bed of languishing! The path of a female preacher is not strewed with thornless roses in constant bloom! No, the pointed briar of fatigue, pierces and wastes her tender flesh, the winds of cruel opposition often loudly roar around her apparently defenceless head; and the waves of temptation beat upon her agitated bosom; and sometimes she is ready to cry, "I shall surely fall one day;" sometimes

she feels like a speckled bird, even among her own brethren; she says I am pressed O house of Israel by your coldness, formality, worldly conformity, and pride, as a cart is pressed under the sheaves! I see breaches in Zion's walls; and the enemy's parting hoof comes in, and defiles the dwelling place of the Most High: ah! then her brethren and sisters turn away, saying, thou prophesiest out of thine own heart, and hast seen nothing. Among professed patrons of female travelling gifts, and such as in their own opinion are advocates for gospel liberty; I think I have seen some persons, whose treatment of travelling females, wrote "tekell" upon their professions; either the calling or gift they doubted. I have thought had they lived in Christ's day, what surprise must seize their minds, to receive the news that Mary Magdalene was travelling about from city to city, with the Saviour, and his apostles! see Luke viii, 1, 2. We know how the proud Pharisee viewed the fair penitent, when she washed the blessed Jesus' feet, with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, pouring over them the costly ointment, and imprinting the grateful kiss. The Saviour's haughty host, who bade him to dinner, secretly despised this humble sacrifice. He did not believe her sincere, judging I suppose

by his own hypocritical heart, with which he communed in the manner following, in which he seems to regard his divine guest as a deceiver. "This man, if he were a prophet would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him ; for she is a sinner. See Luke vii. 39. The omniscient eye of Jehovah Rophi in humble Mary's estimation, was upon the heart of this whited sepulchre, whose cold insensibility and obduracy resembled the marble vessel she held in her hand, from whence streamed the consecrated perfume; and he was thus addressed by the Saviour of the world ; " Simon I have somewhat to say unto thee. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors ; the one owed five hundred pence and the other fifty. And they neither could pay the debt, so he frankly remitted both. Tell me therefore which will love him most." The pharisee replied, " I suppose he who was deepest in debt. Jesus then rehearsed the devout attentions of the woman, and contrasted with them his (the pharisee's) indifference, and pronounces all her sins forgiven. Lovely, condescending Lamb of God, how sweet must those heavenly accents fall on Mary's ear, " soft as the gentle dew upon the tender herb." No wonder she loved the Saviour much, travelled about with him to hear his

preaching, beheld the miracles he wrought, anointed his dear head with the odoriferous oil, ere it was crowned with thorns; watched the mournful tomb where Joseph laid the slain Lamb, and mourned because she could not find it to embalm with rich spices and perfume. Methinks she often in her day climbed Calvary's rugged brow, to view the trembling poplar, upon which her Lord hung three dreadful hours in torturing pain, and chaunted her notes of sacred gratitude upon the hallowed ground once wet with the stream from his side.

"Reason and virtue's boasted sons,
 "Derive no blessings from this tree;
 "For sinners only, Jesus di'd,
 "Then Mary sure he di'd for thee!

"Yes, with my griefs sweet Jesus groan'd
 "And with my guilt his soul was tri'd;
 "My punishment he took, he bore,
 "And Mary lives, for Christ has di'd;

"Awake my heart, my voice and tongue,
 "To praise him now he reigns above,
 "Nothing shall tune poor Mary's song,
 "But Jesus' wisdom power and love."

I have an impression, my dear sister, that the Pharisee who bade Jesus to dine, and witnessed his pardoning mercy to the woman, had heretofore seen her in pride and lux-

ury ; and perhaps had beheld the luxurient tresses of the gay Magdalena, ornamented with the sparkling diamond and snowy pearl, and filled with choice perfume. The amazing, sudden change wrought upon her, was incomprehensible to his contracted mind : he therefore mocked in his heart at her tears, and despised her humble adoration of the Prince of Peace. Would to God, his diabolical pride, hypocrisy and hardness had died with him eternally, and no root remained in the human system. Alas, alas!! But I must break off abruptly, being called for, to converse and pray with a sick female, in the same house where I now board.

Farewell.

LETTER XII.

YOU may possibly wish me to subjoin to my defence of female preaching, a statement of my views concerning their latitude in the use or improvement of gospel gifts.

Respecting the rise, progress and extent of the privileges and usefulness of women in the Church of Christ, should my opinion here be given, it is advanced as individually that is, for myself only, not to bind the conscience or determine the mind of another.— On this principle, I will discover my belief on this critical and very delicate subject.

The scriptures are silent respecting the ordination of females. I conclude it belongs only to the male sex. The title of evangelist, or minister, I do not find in the department of Anna, Priscilla, Phebe, or any other christian women, left in bible record. The administration of gospel ordinances, Baptism and the Lord's supper, uniting persons in marriage, I believe are confined to the male sex; and to me it exhibits an anti-christian spirit for a female to wish or believe them resting upon her. I do not believe the spirit of truth will influence a woman to ask for ordination, and the connected duties, &c. &c.

The gift of illustrating scripture in public religious assemblies, may be conferred upon devoted female saints ; this gift I cannot boast of ; I never conceived it so profitable as exhortation in a female testimony. Men, who possess this power to an eminent degree, are in danger of making shipwreck on the quicksands of spiritual pride ; women are in greater danger, on account of the general depression of their sex ; few women wear the laurel of glory ; rarity possesses a wonderful charm over the human mind ; such a key held in a female hand, while it bursts the lock on divine mysteries, is in danger of opening a door to self-importance and self-applause. Those women who possess this power, have cause to pray unceasingly to God for preservation from a spirit of exaltation through the abundance of revelations given them ; and very constantly guard every avenue to their hearts, lest spiritual pride should exert its destructive power, and prove their overthrow.

Praying, exhorting, and singing in meetings, for the public worship of God, I believe belong to either sex, upon whom the Holy Ghost descends while waiting upon God, with his quickening and commanding influences under the banner of Emmanuel's cross ;

visiting and praying with the sick, I believe are duties very closely binding on the mothers in Israel ; exhorting and praying at burials may occasionally devolve upon female labourers in the Lord's vineyard ; and praying at the family altar, giving thanks for temporal food at the usual meal times, exhorting children, and offering prayer in schools, all are, I believe demanded of the daughters of Zion, in proportion to their faithfulness, and devotion to the cause of God.

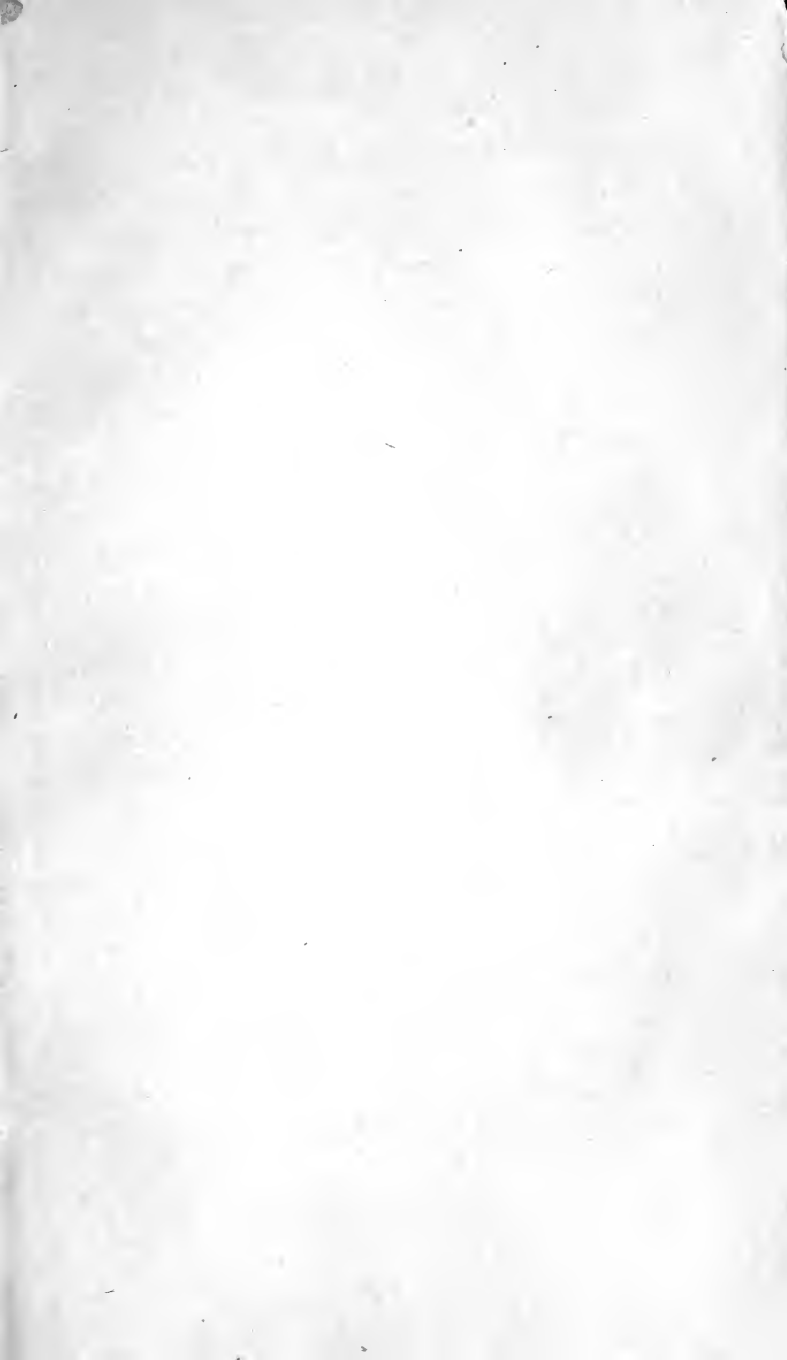
I am not myself very much in favour of females taking the pulpit in this day of reigning prejudice, against female preaching ; let those small inclosures, generally esteemed so sacred, be occupied by men only, is my judgment ; but I will not insist on this point either way—let every one be fully persuaded in her own mind !

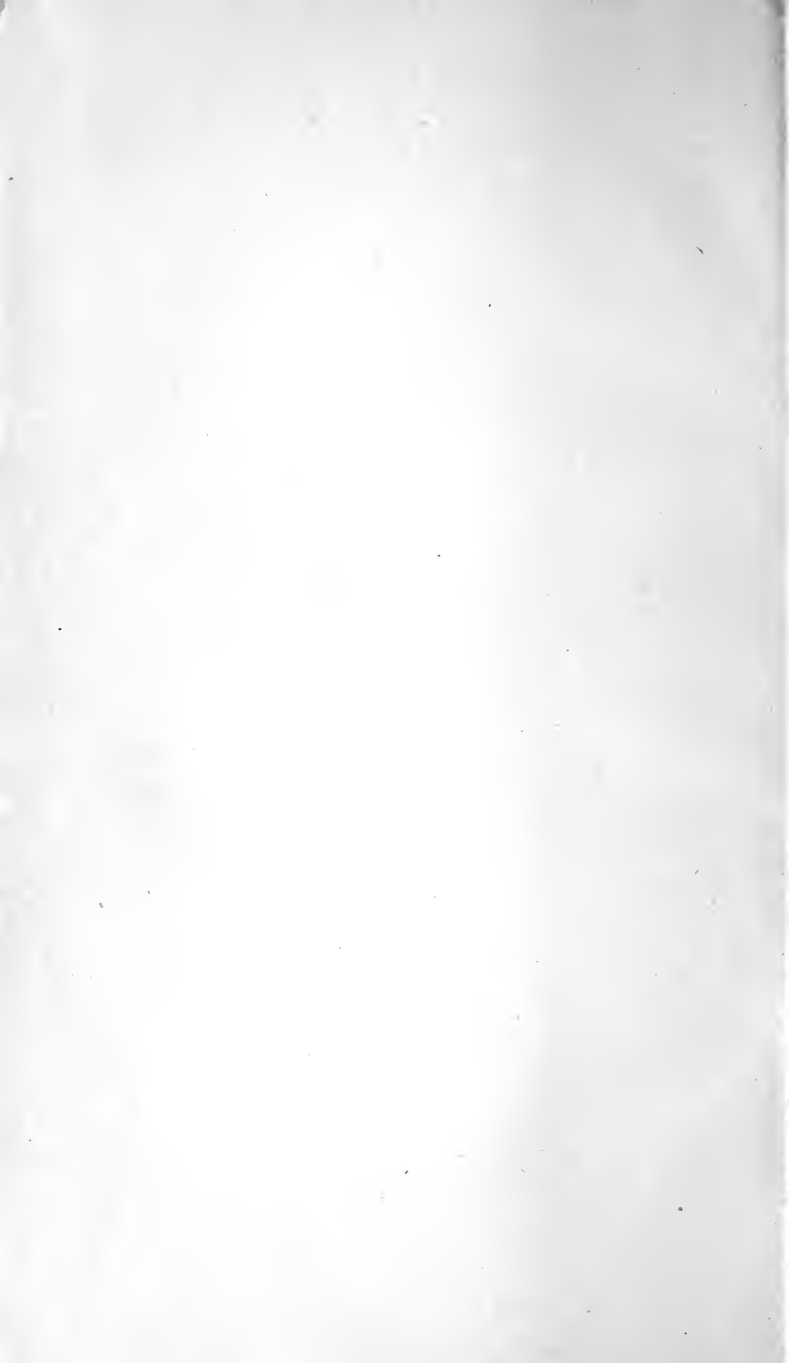
Journeying to visit churches, appoint meetings, and in them (no matter how public) if the providence of God permit, and his divine spirit assist, to extol the stem of Jesse's rod, I really in my very heart do believe, belongs to the daughters of Zion, as well as to the ministers of the gospel ; and woe to them who refuse or neglect going when God calls.

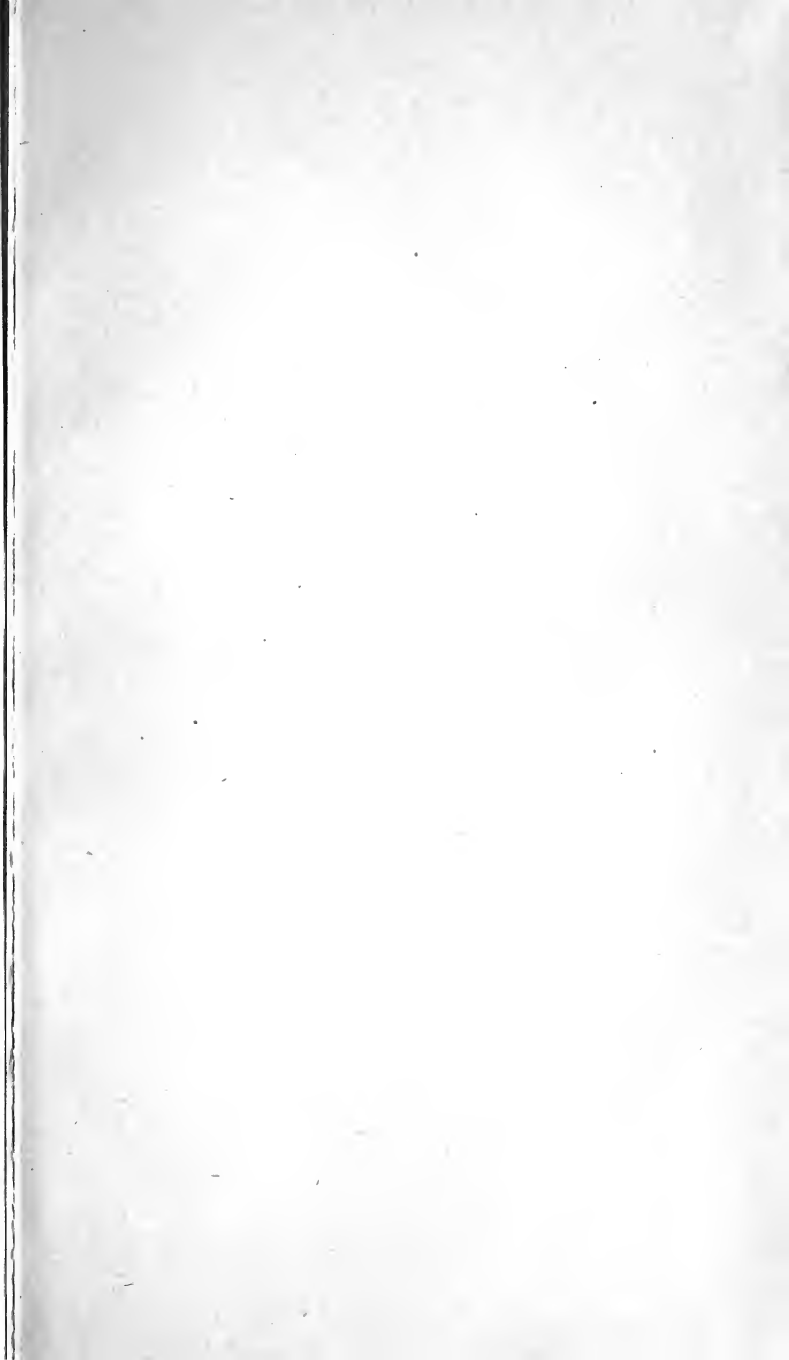
True this class of laborers are suffering characters, they are "hated by the world despised by fools" and laughed at by those whose eternal welfare lays near their hearts, for whom they mourn, weep and pray. The sons and daughters of worldly prosperity cross the ocean, to serve themselves—either health, science or pleasure may tempt them to venture across the deep. "Gentlemen and Ladies" as they call themselves and one another, can travel from Maine to Ohio, for recreation, or lucrative purposes, and never incur a censure; females in large cities frequently resort to the theatre, where their sex are prime actors in diabolical scenes, whose foundation must be in hell. This is no dishonour, although the midnight hour overtake them, while sitting there: Survey the ball room—a throng of people, jumping about one another, panting for breath in the vain exercise of dancing—the mother there, whose tender babe requires her presence in the nursery—the matron, over whose head, perhaps forty summers have rolled in rapid succession; and even the venerable signal of old age, the "almond blossom," might if sought for, beneath the borrowed tresses, or costly turban, reveal the solemn truth that "the winds of sixty winters have wistled through those

branches;" but this---all this is polite---decent, innocent amusements---respectable recreations. Ah! let a female, who loves the cause of Zion, and the souls of her fellow creatures, travel to visit churches, and speak in meetings for the worship of God; and what a commotion is raised! She is a disgrace to her sex, her relations and the name of religion! But I forbear—it is sufficient that God knoweth all things, to whom just judgment doth alone belong.

I feel my mind winding up, if I may use the expression, and shall soon drop my pen. Oh my dear sister, the execution of this little work, has been to me a most self-denying task, because I am convinced it must meet the public eye; and am aware by popular prejudice it is likely to become, like the author, an object of contempt. I have written a brief relation of my own exercises respecting my retreat from the congregational church; Baptism by imersion, and travelling with the testimony of Jesus; designing that it should be enclosed with this; but on the whole conclude to publish it separate, which I purpose doing ere long, if God permit, to whose eternal and glorious name be ascribed all honour and praise. Amen.

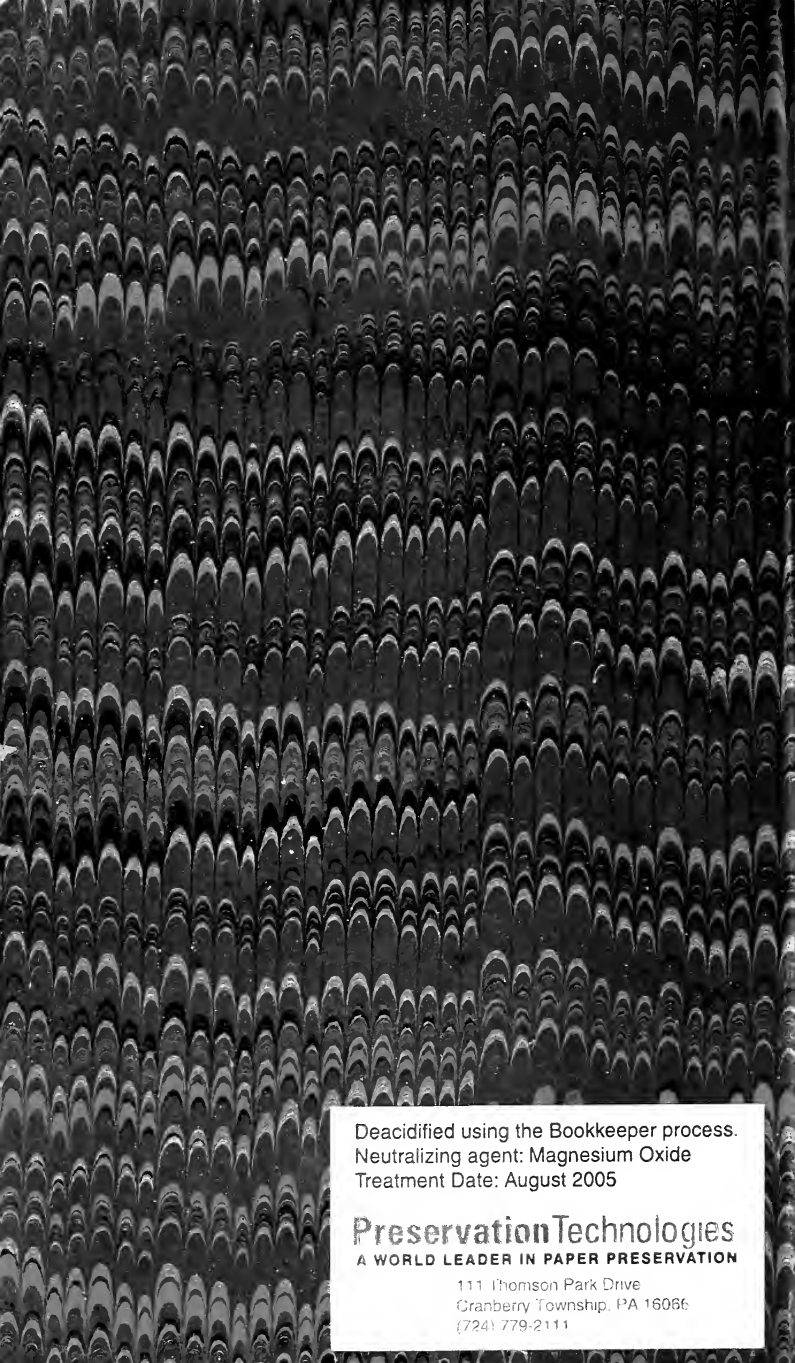








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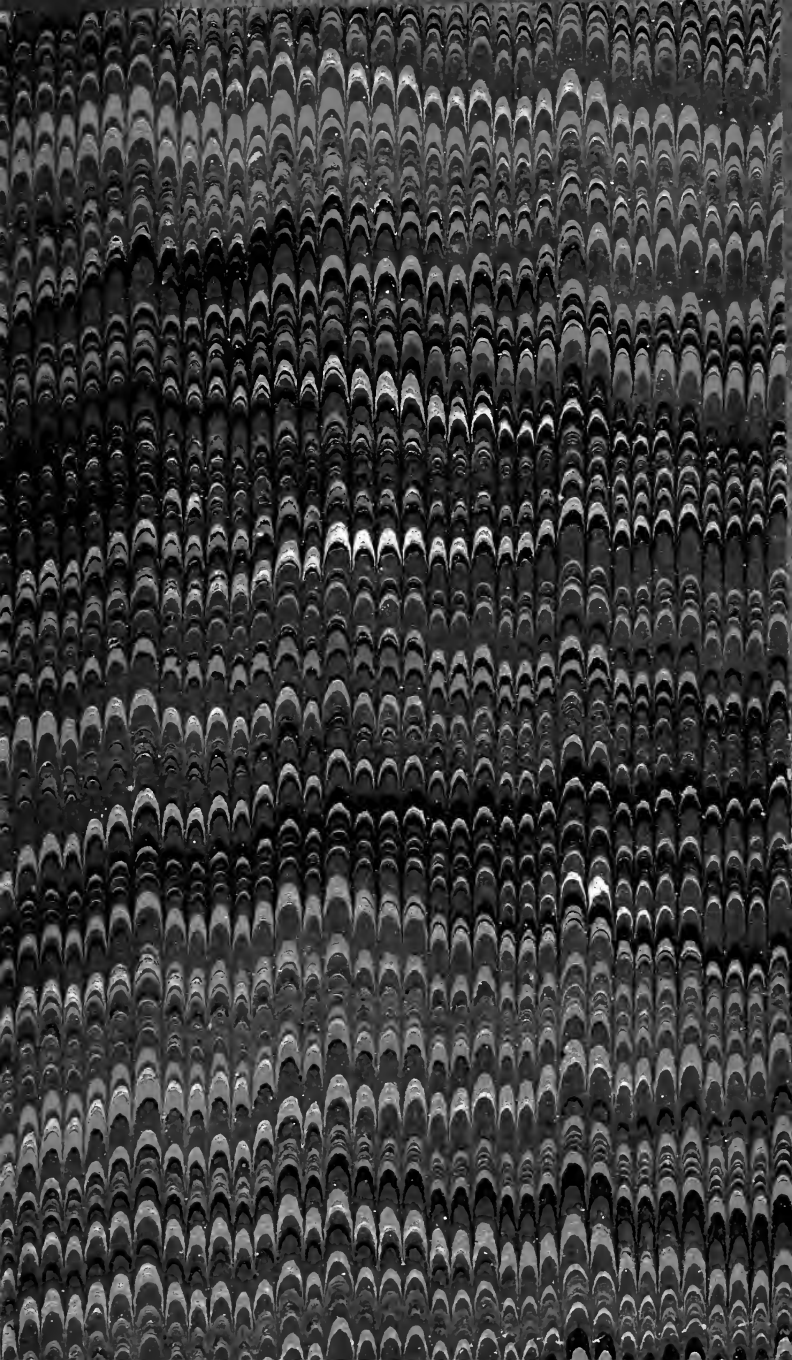


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